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CONTENTS

	Page
Comments	369
Policy and Armaments	372
M. Flandin. By Alexander Werth	373
A London Diary	375
This England	376
Forgetting. By Y. Y.	376
Wise Worms. By E. L. Grant Watson	377
Correspondence	378
From Vigilans; Sir William Beveridge; H. N. Mukerjee; Alexander W. Williams; Esmé Lansbury.	
M.P.s and Covent Garden. By W. J. Turner	379
Three Films. By John Marks	380
Plays and Pictures	381
Books in General. By G. W. Stonier	383
Reviews:	Page
Three Travellers. By Peter Quennell	384
Marxism Trenchantly Restated. By G. D. H. Cole	384
L'Ami du Peuple. By Michael Roberts	389
Law and Politics. By Harold J. Laski	390
Honourable Mountains. By Ralph Bates	390
French Influence in Arnold. By David Gascoyne	391
New Novels. By Cyril Connolly	392
The Establishment. By J. L. Hammond	392
J'Accuse	394
Shorter Notices	394
Gramophone Notes. By Edward Sackville West	396
Week-end Competitions	398
Crossword	400
The Week in the City. By Toreador	402

The New Statesman and Nation—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

MONDAY'S debate on the White Paper was an extremely revealing occasion. Mr. Baldwin presented the Government's case moderately and effectively. The basis of his argument, if we interpret it rightly, was that since the League without Germany, Japan and the United States is hopelessly weak we must increase our own armaments, lest Hitler should make the Kaiser's mistake and shape his policy on an erroneous notion of Great Britain's ultimate weakness or pacifism. The White Paper and the House of Commons vote in support of it should serve according to this view to warn Germany's rulers, who know that they are not yet in a position to enter upon a relentless armaments race, that Great Britain is not to be bullied. The situation, in a word, is better suited to the discreet flourishing of the sword than to a further benison of olive branches. A strong policy which gave Herr Hitler a cold is the best preparation for the coming visit of Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden to Berlin.

The Appeal to Arms

We do not deny that the appeal to force is the most likely to affect the minds of the present rulers of Germany. But whether British increases in arms will have the kind of effect Mr. Baldwin hopes for is open to doubt. The first reaction of the official German press is to welcome the debate as a sign that Great Britain is at length turning from Geneva "back to realities"—to the *Realpolitik* of the old system of alliances in which peace is at best an armed truce before the next war. And the House of Commons debate supplied plenty of justification for this interpretation. For Mr. Baldwin's moderate speech prepared the way for Sir Austen Chamberlain's frankly jingo appeal which was cheered to the echo by the full-throated chorus on the packed Government benches. Listening to the debate there was no shadow of doubt what are the real feelings of the great majority of present M.P.s about disarmament and the League. Mr. Baldwin is, no doubt, sincere in his declaration that he still believes in the collective system, and that the Government hopes to strengthen, not to weaken the League. But the mass of his followers greeted with scornful laughter every speaker who expressed a commonsense interest in confronting Germany with the pooled force of the League rather than with the separate armaments of the Versailles Powers. Most of these gentlemen frankly hate the League and rejoice in the return to armament building as if it were a good thing in itself. They did not argue the real point of the debate—the effect of the White Paper on Germany. They simply rejoiced that we had returned to "the good old rule, the ancient plan" of trusting in our own strength and keeping our powder dry and plentiful.

The Response of Democracy

Mr. Baldwin made a merit of "trusting democracy" by informing it of the true situation. That would indeed

be a merit. But Mr. Baldwin was talking to a House of Commons which, as the results of the Peace Ballot show throughout the country, is completely unrepresentative of popular feeling. The public has not despaired of the collective system, even if the majority of the House of Commons has. There is every sign that the Government's foreign policy is now causing a great revulsion of feeling, and it is possible that Labour may before very long have a chance of attempting to put into practice the constructive international policy which Major Attlee again advocated in the House of Commons. It is a policy which aims at an international air force and a joint international civil air service, and which has as an immediate method of work our active co-operation within the League, especially with the democratic countries which still believe in the League and with the U.S.S.R. It may happen, of course, that Labour will fail in the attempt to recreate an international system, or that the situation will have deteriorated beyond remedy by the time that Labour reaches power. In that case, no doubt, Nationalism will become rampant even among many signatories of the Peace Ballot. But to-day it is quite clear that the Government policy is directly in conflict with the wishes of the majority of the British people.

The "Mad Revolt"

The Greek revolt is—indeed, was some days ago—all over bar the shouting. It has been called a "mad revolt," and that, if one may be wise after the event, seems near the truth. Whether the republic is really in danger from the Tsaldaris Government, and the Venizelists were making a genuine effort to save it, we cannot be positive. But they evidently had next to no popular backing, and their forces could put up no more than an *opera bouffe* fight. Material damage has been done running into some millions of pounds, but there has been remarkably little blood spilt—the total casualties are put at a hundred or two. It seemed towards the end of last week as if the affair might have ugly international repercussions. But happily most of the reports in the foreign press, of alarms and excursions in Turkey and Bulgaria and elsewhere, proved to be sensation-mongering. There is general regret at the part played by M. Venizelos in this rising—and something more than regret, we are told, among the rebels, who accuse him of base desertion in the hour of defeat. But the game was up and, sentiment apart, what good could he have done anybody by awaiting death or capture in Crete? The rumour of his intention to "retire for ever from politics" is taken as a huge joke in Athens. It might be well if it were serious. Great as may have been the services rendered by M. Venizelos' patriotism in the distant past, it has done little for the true welfare of the Greek people in more recent times.

The Week in America

Shifting the emphasis for a moment from "recovery" to "reform," President Roosevelt has sent Congress a message demanding legislation against the holding companies which at present dominate the power supplies of the United States. Within a few years all holding companies that cannot prove their technical usefulness as co-ordinators of supply are to be broken up; and even those which are allowed to survive are to be subjected to special regulation. Thus the President takes the field against one of the more unpopular forms of financial monopoly, and seeks to prove to the public that he is not in favour of "trusts," as many critics of the N.R.A. have been apt to suggest. The new proposals will meet with strong resistance from the powerful vested interests affected by them; but the President can be sure of public backing if he sticks to his guns. Meanwhile, the oratorical bombardment of Senator Huey Long, Father Coughlin and General Johnson goes merrily on; and Mr. Shearer is enlivening the Senate's arms inquiry by denouncing as un-American international pacifists all those who seek to probe into the affairs of the armament firms, not excepting the President himself. Senator Long for his part unsparingly denounces the President; but Father Coughlin combines his animosity against General Johnson with a strong defence of Mr. Roosevelt, and confronts the American people with the choice "Roosevelt or Ruin." In Congress legislative output remains scanty. The Work-Relief Bill is not yet through, and the revision of the N.R.A. has hardly begun. But the President is busy drafting fresh messages dealing with the re-organisation of transport and other parts of his plan.

The Employment Outlook

When the unemployment total rose in January by about 240,000 we were told that there was no great significance in the increase, which was largely due to exceptional causes. But the figures for February, issued this week, hardly bear out that contention. There has indeed been a fall in the numbers out of work, but only a fall of 40,000, so that the increase in employment as compared with a year ago is only 136,000, and the decrease in unemployment only 32,000. While not in themselves very significant, these two months' unfavourable returns seem unfortunately to confirm the evidence from other sources that the 1934 "boomlet" has, for the time at any rate, spent its force, and that we are now feeling the unfortunate effects of the American recession, of the growing difficulties of the gold standard countries, and of the severe import restrictions imposed by the pseudo-gold countries, such as Germany and, now, Italy. Failing further decisive steps to promote an internal expansion of demand, we can see no force at present making for improved employment in Great Britain, and several making against it. But the recent fall in sterling will have made our monetary authorities more fearful of expansionist expedients. The Government is more likely to hang on in the hope of an American recovery than to attempt, unless it is pushed hard, any adventurous measures designed to promote recovery.

Meat

The meat muddle grows worse and worse. The Australians are demanding an increased quota for the next few months, while the permanent arrangements for dealing with meat imports are under discussion. Dr. Page, the Country Party leader, who is Acting-Premier in Mr. Lyons's absence, is more and more menacingly demanding a bigger advantage for Empire as against Argentine meat, and also for Australian as against New Zealand supplies, which he holds to be unduly favoured under the present temporary scheme. Mr. Lyons has decided instead of stopping in Italy to come straight on to Great Britain in

order to hurry up the negotiations; but there is still no sign of any approach to agreement over the larger issues involved. Mr. Lyons dare not be too accommodating, with Dr. Page lying in wait for him on his return; but we cannot be very accommodating either, with our relations with the Argentine to take into account. If meat consumption could be expanded, it would be easy enough to satisfy the rival claims; but as our object is to raise meat prices in the interests of the home livestock producers, demand will certainly fall instead of expanding when the new measures designed to achieve this come into force. The Australians may seem unreasonable; and so they are. But we must not forget that the outlook for them is serious. They have developed their meat production in reliance largely on the British market; and if that fails them it is not easy to see where else they are to turn. The regime of "poverty in plenty" has set us all yet another unanswerable conundrum—unanswerable, that is, within the existing economic structure.

The Housing Bill in Committee

The Housing Bill goes on its way through Standing Committee without much public notice; for though Standing Committees' proceedings are reported in the papers, only the experts usually pay close attention to them. This week there has been under discussion the clause which empowers local authorities to hand over the administration of their housing properties to "non-political" management commissions. A number of Conservatives, rallying to the defence of private enterprise, sought to make this provision compulsory on all authorities, and so to take a large part of the housing question "out of politics." The Labour Party, on the other hand, reasonably objected to the encouragement given in the Bill to such forms of management, as designed to remove matters like rents and conditions of tenancy from the range of popular control. The Government's sympathies are obviously with the first of these two schools of thought; but they do not venture to attempt compulsion—only that selective pressure which the Bill will enable the Ministry of Health to exert. In theory, the independent management device has something to recommend it, or would have if housing policy were not a subject of political controversy. But as matters stand it is desirable to increase, and not to check, the influence of public opinion on housing administration; and this will be best done by leaving direct responsibility in the hands of the elected local authorities.

City Scandals

The Government was distinctly on the defensive when Mr. John Wilmot and Major Nathan launched their attack upon recent City activities. Government spokesmen pleased their opponents by entering upon an academic defence of speculation as a necessary part of the working of the capitalist system. The attack ranged over a wide field, introducing into the discussion tin as well as shellac and pepper, and much more that was piquant would clearly have been said if the Speaker had not cut Mr. Wilmot short. As it is, interest is concentrated primarily on the much discussed James and Shakspeare issue; the public will need a good deal of satisfying about this issue, and the Government is pledged to an investigation which goes behind it—if not as far behind it as we should like. For the moment there is nothing more that can be done until the Official Receiver's preliminary report appears in a month's time.

Help for Scholars

Just about two years ago the Nazi regime imposed its ban on Jewish and Socialist and Liberal teachers in the universities of Germany, and some twelve hundred scholars and scientists were driven from their posts. Much has been done to help them—not only from charitable motives, but from a belief in academic freedom and out of respect for real scholarship—by colleagues and sympathisers abroad. Great Britain, we are happy to know, has been prominent in this work, and a number of the displaced Germans have been established in our universities, whilst others have been given grants to carry on research. In every case the greatest care has been exercised to prevent any displacement of British scholars. A pamphlet (*A Crisis in the University World*) published the other day by Mr. J. G. McDonald, the "High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany," reveals in very interesting detail the volume of funds collected and the posts found in various countries of Europe besides our own, as well as in America and in Turkey and in Palestine. Summary figures show 248 scholars permanently, and 366 temporarily, placed. It is a good record, but the work is only half completed. Mr. McDonald appeals urgently for more funds, and we hope he will get a generous response.

Speed Traps

Two major innovations in the campaign against road slaughter are about to become effective—driving tests and the 30 m.p.h. speed limit in built-up areas. For driving tests there is everything to be said, and to a speed limit of 30 m.p.h. in towns there can be no reasonable objection; the careful motorist usually keeps within this limit already. It is outside towns, in areas scheduled as "built-up," that the trouble is likely to occur. To start with, of course, it is a shocking criticism of our lack of control over building and land development that there should be these towns outside towns at all; to have to impose a limit on a by-pass road is to make nonsense of the very name. The other objection is to the methods by which the Commissioner of Police proposes to enforce the limit. Apart from the difficulties of using police in plain-clothes for dealing with motorists, and the risk of reopening the roads to the bandit, motorists are likely to take strong exception to the resurrection—in a new and more pernicious form—of the bad old speed trap. In justification of the disguised cars and disguised policemen the *Times* pleads that "it is no longer a case of policeman against driver, but of driver against driver," and that it is therefore unreasonable to demand that the policeman-driver shall advertise himself by wearing a uniform. This is nonsense. The duty of the police is to prevent the law being broken, and they will do this both more effectively and more fairly by being obviously policemen. Whether a strict interpretation of the new law throughout built-up areas is going to be practicable is another matter.

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POLICY AND ARMAMENTS

PUBLIC opinion, startled and shocked by Mr. MacDonald's White Paper, focussed attention with sure instinct on its moral implications. One oddity, however, in its reasoning escaped attention. Seeking for a bogy to justify an increase in the budgets of all three services, the Prime Minister found Hitler useful. Some part, but only a part, of the Air Force increase may fairly be attributed to German rearmament, but this excuse has little or no bearing on the Army estimates, and none at all on the naval increase. Whatever Hitler may be doing on land and in the air, he has not been accused of rearming at sea. Now, though the naval increase accounted this year only for a third of the total of £10,000,000, Mr. MacDonald spoke of his future plans with rather less than his customary ambiguity. He declared plainly for the replacement of monster battleships, and hinted at his determination to raise the total of cruisers from fifty to seventy ships. When one takes into account the fortification of Singapore and the cost of the new air squadrons based upon it, it is clear that the main explanation of the increase of British armaments, whether actual or to come, is to be sought for to the east of Berlin. It suited Mr. MacDonald's pulpit eloquence to say Germany, but in fact he meant Japan. Nor is this surprising. Japan has denounced the Washington Convention, and shattered in so doing not only the treaties that limit naval armaments, but the system of public law that regulated the affairs of the Pacific region. What is true of British armaments applies in an even greater degree to the increase of Russian and American preparedness.

This diagnosis will stand close scrutiny. It is one thing to believe that the Nazi spirit is the most powerful volcano of moral poison active in Europe to-day, and quite another to treat it as an excuse for British rearmament. Hitler, after all, offered to limit his aerial armaments to 50 per cent. of the French total; one cannot blame him for M. Barthou's flat refusal to consider this very moderate proposal. Nazi ambitions and Nazi armaments are not immediately directed against the West, but rather against Russia. It is in the Ukraine and perhaps on the Baltic coasts that German youth and German heavy industry have been taught to see their future colonies and monopolised markets. That the German general staff believes that it could, even with Polish aid, face the entire Red Army with anything near its present reserves is scarcely possible. On the contrary, it is very well informed, for up to two years ago the Reichswehr relied on the Soviet Union to equip it with forbidden arms; it can have no comfortable illusions about the strength of this adversary. The chance for a German attack on Russia will arrive if and when the Japanese engage the Red Army in Siberia. By this roundabout route we arrive, then, at the conclusion legible in the British estimates. The alarm, the unrest, the rearmament may be general, but the immediate danger, the spring that may set the whole infernal mechanism in motion, must be located in Japan. What a rearmed Germany might do, if the world fails to organise itself for peace, ten years or even five years hence, is beyond the range of our vision. Our case is rather that a conflagration on any great scale is conceivable within the next two or three years only if Japan gives the signal. It follows, to use Mr. Maisky's epigram, that "Peace is indivisible." We might perhaps keep our own island inviolate by a watch on the Rhine, but this parochial conception of security will not suffice to avert a general war.

The problem of keeping the world's peace, if this reasoning is sound, reduces itself in the immediate future to a single question. How can we immobilise Japan, or better still, bring her back within the international system?

It is not an easy question, and it may be urgent. The Chinese Government is in grave financial difficulties, partly because of the vagaries of silver, and also because its rebel peasantry is ripe for civil war. It has two alternatives from which to choose. A British-American loan may be available. Japan also offers credits, but subject to political conditions. Various versions are current, but all of them convey the impression that Japan will lend with both hands, send officers, instructors and advisers after her loans, help Nanking to crush its rebels and generally make herself useful, provided that China turns her back on the League and the West, consents to revolve in Japan's orbit, and adopts with her the motto "Asia for the Asiatics." One is not unduly cynical if one translates all this into something little less than the conversion of China—or such part of it as Nanking can hold or recapture—into a protectorate and sphere of economic interest directed by the soldiers and bankers of Tokio. That spells in the long run "Asia for the Japanese." Should credits on these terms prove unacceptable, then Japan will do her swallowing with her customary methodical gradualism. She will, that is to say, see a bomb or a displaced railway sleeper when she is ready to see it, and having seen it, she will add another province to her protectorates. The choice, in short, lies between being swallowed piecemeal or whole. To all this a British-American offer of money is no answer. Money is no use; the League's medical and educational officers are even less use; nor are munitions and American aviators of much avail, if this terrible neighbour goes on absorbing Chinese provinces at the rate of three or thereabouts each year. The creditor who lends to China must protect China from the jaws of this omnivorous Empire.

This is a hard saying. The League has tried and failed. Great Britain most certainly will not try alone, nor ought she to take that risk. As little will America, with a much smaller trading interest, do it. Even together they are not an obviously irresistible combination, since neither has defensible bases sufficiently near the heart of China. The Japanese count, moreover, on their good luck on dividing these two. They have their partisans in this country, and American opinion is predominantly isolationist.

The result, however, of doing nothing effectual to immobilise Japan is unfortunately not peace. Chinese cities are bombed, and peasant levies mown down. America and Great Britain both arm, and by their arming raise the temperature of the world's anger and fears. Russia waits her turn to be attacked, and if it comes, Hitler will break loose. Inaction, in short, does not spell peace. Finally, if none of these calamities happen, if China can be swallowed peacefully, what course do we predict for world-history with this mammoth military

Empire in command of half Asia and the whole Pacific Ocean?

A solution is none the less conceivable. At Washington Lord Balfour and Mr. Hughes faced a similar situation. Japan was, indeed, with the "Anfu" Government at Pekin in her pocket, Shantung occupied by her armies and the Twenty-one Demands signed and sealed in her portfolio, much more completely in control of China than she is to-day. Those two men contrived to act together, and their expedient was to form the Nine Power group of Pacific Governments. Two led; the rest followed. They made, however, one unlucky mistake. They ignored Russia. That was still the usage, even when the Lytton Commission was sent out. To-day the folly of this omission is clear enough. For if we confine ourselves to realistic considerations, Russia has at once the strongest motive for immobilising Japan and the most readily available forces with which to do it. A combination of the Red Air Force with the British and American navies with fresh bases at their disposal would certainly impress even the Japanese military mind. This is plain language, but it is well to translate that comfortable abstraction, "collective security," into concrete terms. It means the assembly of irresistible force against the probable aggressors, or it means nothing.

The problem, then, is political. There is available in the world force enough to deal with this reckless and formidable Power, and that without any further building of monster ships or aerial squadrons. It comes to this: can London and Washington, which have got to the point of offering money to China, so far overcome their capitalistic prudery as to associate themselves in the cause of peace with a Communist Power which happens, by reason of its geographical position, to hold the military key to this problem? It is not inconceivable. Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow is a good omen.

The first step, then, it seems to us, before any Naval Conference meets is to reconstitute the Nine Power Pacific Group by inviting Russia to join it. The Japanese have the merits as well as the vices of realists. They can recognise an irresistible combination when it faces them. There are methods well known to diplomacy, some quiet, some dramatic, of demonstrating solidarity. If three Great Powers have an identical interest in the preservation of peace and the maintenance of an independent China, they can find the means, if their statesmen have common sense, of making their united wills effective. That an economic boycott is necessary one need not assume. These three need only show a common front. At the incredible worst, military action would be required only if the Japanese were first of all so foolish as to challenge a League embargo, and then so mad as to attempt to break it by armed action.

Armaments follow policy. Japan is arming to stave off Western intervention in China for all time. Prove to her that the intervention can, even to-day, be organised with comparative ease, and the Disarmament Conference and the Naval Conference might then assemble with some hope of success. One proof that solidarity exists in this distracted world would change the whole situation at Geneva.

The first business of a Ten Power Conference would be to attend to China's case. But it would fail, if it conceived this duty in negative terms. Japan has her own tragic problem of over-population. She justifies her militarism to herself, as all nations do or have done at some phase of their history, in terms of life and food and cradles. Somehow, whether by rationed markets, assured sources of raw materials, or areas of regulated emigration, her needs must be met. The resolve to immobilise her militarism should march with the will to plan a world in which she—and for that matter, Germans also—can live and breathe. The thing can be done, if London and Washington will condescend to act with Moscow.

M. FLANDIN

M. FLANDIN has been in office for over four months, and although he was "certain to fall" at the end of January, and again in February, he has not fallen yet, and his parliamentary majority is as large as ever. When he formed his coalition Government twelve hours after Doumergue's resignation, the news was welcomed with a feeling of profound relief by all who cared for democracy and parliamentary government. The "blackmail" of the Street, the constant threat that another riot would break out in Paris if Parliament did not blindly obey Doumergue—all this had come to an end. The general public did not know much about Flandin, except that he was 6 feet 4 ins., that he had been Minister of this and that in several Cabinets, and that the *Humanité* always attached the word Aéropostale to his name, and treated him as a crook. The fact that Flandin had been the legal adviser of that company, which later got into serious financial difficulties, did not, in itself, prove anything; and when, in 1932, the affair came up for discussion before the Chamber, Flandin managed to clear himself of all blame. But the fact that he was Minister of Finance under Tardieu seemed enough to damn him for all time, and "Aéropostale" was a useful label for the purpose.

Actually, when Flandin came into office, the Socialists and Communists were rather relieved. Flandin was, after all, a good republican who, unlike Doumergue, was not going to wage a holy war against them; and they stopped calling him Aéropostale. The rest of republican opinion in France had long ago forgiven him his past association with Tardieu, for it was well known that there were no more bitter enemies than Flandin and Tardieu. For three or four years they had been competing for the high command of the Centre in the Chamber; but while Tardieu had always lumped together the Radicals, Socialists and Communists as "the enemies of France," Flandin had stood, ever since November, 1933 (when he rushed to the rescue of the Sarraut Government), for coalition with the Radicals. He was in favour of a National Government or, failing that, in favour of a Centre-Radical coalition. In other words, whatever the attitude of the extreme Right, he considered the Radicals an essential part of any coalition. This shows that in November, 1934, he held the key position in Parliament which made him almost a "man of Providence." When, after forming his Cabinet, he appeared before the Chamber, he said that this would be its last chance, and that it would be "the last experiment in parliamentary government."

M. Flandin's ministerial declaration, which said that the Government would put constitutional controversies aside and concentrate on economic problems, was well received. Parliament voted the (rather unbalanced) Budget in record time, and went on to examine the new Government's Wheat and Wine Bills. These were passed before the Christmas recess. Since the New Year the Chamber has spent much of its time discussing the Government's Bill for inter-trade agreements, tending to regulate production by means of arbitration in the most depressed industries. In practice, the Bill does not seem to amount to much, but it shows that the Government is trying to do something. There

have also been discussions on unemployment, on the plight of the tourist trade, and on other subjects which were hardly mentioned in the days of Doumergue.

France is now suffering acutely from the economic crisis. The official unemployment figure has exceeded 500,000, and the actual number of workless is much higher. Tariffs, quotas and the gold franc are responsible for a disastrous decline in the French export trade, and the invisible exports from *tourisme* have declined from 12 milliard francs in 1929 to 2 milliards in 1934. There is a slump in agriculture, in industry and in shipping; there is economic and political unrest in the Colonies; in short, there is enough material for any professional pessimist to work on.

How has M. Flandin grappled with this situation? One frequently hears references to the "Flandin experiment"—which is apt to suggest that something like a New Deal is now being applied to France. That is hardly the case; and, at first sight, M. Flandin not only lacks a clear economic programme, but his ideas appear to be full of contradictions. He, for instance, declares himself in favour of free trade and free competition, and yet holds that, in a time of crisis, a certain amount of "managed economy" and State intervention is indispensable. But the contradiction is actually more apparent than real. What he means is that the difficulties accumulated during the past few years must be cleared out of the way before there can be a return to free competition. The best example of how he applies this doctrine in practice is provided by his Wheat Act. In accordance with this Act, the Government bought up and relieved the market of an important part of the surplus wheat that had been weighing on prices. As a result, to quote M. Flandin's latest speech, the price of wheat in the open market rose, between December and March, from 65 francs per quintal to 78 francs. It is a case of restoring a *sane* free market. No doubt the several hundred millions that the Government will have spent on the *assainissement* of the wheat market will be wasted if the 1935 harvest leaves over a large surplus; but as there have been three exceptionally good harvests in succession, M. Flandin felt that the gamble was justified.

M. Flandin, of course, realises as well as anybody that such a gamble cannot solve the fundamental difficulties. But what are these difficulties? There are a few people in France and a large number of people abroad who say that the devaluation of the franc is the only solution. With this M. Flandin disagrees. He is not opposed to the "principle" of devaluation, but he holds that nothing would be gained if the franc were devaluated before the stabilisation of the pound and dollar. The devaluation of the franc in such conditions might only result in a "depreciation race." He assumed—at least until the last fall of the pound—that the pound and dollar would before very long be stabilised. But apart from that, he also assumes that with the rise of prices in America (though not yet in England) the gap between the French and American price levels is tending to disappear, and that, such being the case, it will not be necessary to devaluate the franc. Who can say definitely whether he is right or not?

As far as the French home market is concerned, M. Flandin holds that cheap money alone can revive the economic activity of the country. And it is precisely on this point that his policy (as he readily admits) has met with the greatest difficulties. He has made many bitter allusions to those "financial oligarchies," to those "*syndicats d'intérêts*," which, according to him, are doing their best to hamper his economic policy:

> In a time of crisis, it is the first duty of the Bank of France to give employment to its gold reserve, and to provide the economy of the country with purchasing power that would pour fresh life into it. *This policy, I know, is meeting with the greatest resistance. For it tends to deprive certain financial interests of a number of privileges;* but these privileges, I hold, have been tolerated only owing to the obscurity and general confusion that have surrounded them.

Although M. Flandin recently appointed a "liberal" Governor to the Bank of France (who is expected to help the Government by rediscounting more than the usual amount of Treasury Bills, whose limit was raised some weeks ago from 10 to 15 milliards) he still has to reckon with the conservative *conseil de Régence* of the Bank, the private banks, and all the other "*syndicats d'intérêts*" who prefer dear money to cheap money. "The French Government," M. Flandin said recently, "can convert 6 per cent. loans to 4 per cent. in London; which is more than it can do in Paris."

He is grappling with this credit problem; since his Government came into power the Chamber has dealt with various economic bills, most important of which are the Wine and Wheat Bills; it is also going to organise the meat and milk markets. All this work is difficult and slow and unspectacular, and M. Flandin, who in his speeches never hesitates to emphasise the seriousness of the general situation, has not won any personal popularity. And yet, there is a feeling, both in Parliament and in the country, that whatever the soundness of his economics, he is trying to do the right thing, and that he ought, at least, to be given a chance. Personal popularity is not essential in France; Poincaré, though respected for being a hard worker and an honest man, was never popular.

It is perhaps a pity that M. Flandin, who is a sincere and skilful defender of parliamentary government, should not be personally more inspiring. But even so, he has managed fairly well to restore the authority of Parliament, and to keep the anti-parliamentary forces at bay. His slightly ironical way of handling the Fascist demonstration on February 6th was most effective; for nothing is more damaging in France than to be treated with gentle ridicule. When, three days later, the Communist demonstration in the Place de la République was given exactly the same facilities as the Fascist demonstration in the Place de la Concorde, the Fascists thought this an insult. But Flandin clearly showed that, as a Republican, he saw no reason for giving preferential treatment to the Fascists.

A little irony goes a long way in France, and the Fascists, who were taken very seriously by Doumergue, are feeling rather uneasy. They are not in great evidence just now; and when I recently went to a Croix de Feu meeting, I thought that Colonel de la Rocque had lost much of his bombast and self-assurance. Their day may come; but if it does, it is still far ahead.

A little more alarming at the moment is the agitation conducted among the peasants by the Front Paysan. Its moving spirit is a M. Dorgères, in reality a *vicomte*, who (though standing for Parliament himself) threatens to blow the Chamber to smithereens, and urges his followers to withdraw their funds from the savings banks. This "peasant" agitator is actually supported by some of the big landed proprietors of Normandy and Brittany, which largely accounts for the sympathy with which this would-be *jacquerie* is treated in the *Jour*, the *Echo de Paris* and some other papers of the Right. The movement, however, is not important enough to worry M. Flandin, especially at a time when his Wheat Act has done at least something to improve the position of the farmers.

The foreign policy of the Flandin Government has, needless to say, done much to give it prestige in the country, even among those who are not yet impressed by its economic achievements. The settlement of the Jugoslav-Hungarian dispute, the painless Saar operation, and the Rome and London agreements make, indeed, a remarkable four-months' record. However bad economic conditions may still be, many a man who, a year ago, anticipated the early end of the Republic, now begins to wonder whether, under any other Government, or under any other regime, France could have fared much better than she has done during the past four months. French politics to-day are no longer as dramatic and spectacular as they were a year ago; but that is all to the good.

ALEXANDER WERTH

Paris, March 12th.

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT will the Government do with Mr. Lloyd George's New Deal proposals when they've got them? The answer is that they will do exactly what they would have done if they had never seen them. If they decide that it is good politics to adopt some measure of public works, they will treat Mr. Lloyd George nicely. If they want to risk his enmity—and his speeches will mean a lot of votes in the country—they can easily trot out all the old arguments and declare his scheme charlatanism. It will be easy anyway. For Mr. Lloyd George would be the first to admit that he has not got statistically water-tight proposals ready for examination. He knows well enough that one gets the figures from Whitehall, not from a team of private advisers. Indeed, I expect the proposals that he is putting up to the Government will be rather less "sound" as well as less detailed than those he put forward in 1924 or 1929. I was amused to hear that before asking to see the details of the New Deal the Government took steps to find out whether any of the famous economists who helped in the preparation of the Liberal Yellow Book were behind his present proposals. They made sure that they would have no big economist to tackle before they risked seeing the New Deal. They know what it will be like—an early draft was after all circulated to young Tory members and others. It will contain some interesting propositions about land development; it will advocate not merely small holdings but large scale development, including rural industries, and will link this up with a big electrification scheme. It will very sensibly argue that the Budget should be divided into two parts, a Capital Development Budget and a Current Account. Its main item is the demand for a National Development Board, and it will not presume to dictate in too much detail what public work schemes this Board should set on foot. Clearly, the Government can do just what it likes with such a document; it may claim that it is already working on these lines where they are sound as, for instance, in housing, and that for the rest, there are all sorts of convincing administrative reasons why nothing of the sort should be done. The one policy I am sure the Government will not adopt is to say "Come, Mr. Lloyd George, we agree in principle with your ideas. We will make you Minister of Employment and give you the services of Whitehall to work out the details for you." That would really be fun.

* * *

I know one man who has been to *Young England* at least thirty times. I have only been once. My visit was a lucky one: it occurred during the "best period" of this incredible play's career. I have seldom packed so much laughter into an evening. I should describe the play as the worst constructed, most ludicrous and sentimental show that ever ran for any considerable time in the West End. It might have been written by Lady Houston. It was a superb butt for wit and many of the regular attenders had perfected an excellent technique of adding to the absurdities by anticipating them. There must be many people to whom "telephone to the Duchess" is now the natural response when anyone asks for a solution of a difficulty. Unfortunately, there are always people who do not know the difference between a joke and a brawl. The interruptions ceased to be witty and became merely rowdy. A group of London University students discovered a heaven-sent opportunity of imitating Oxford and Cambridge boat race night raggers. Continuous uproar, of course, completely defeats the fun. The latest joke is for the stalls and the gallery each noisily to accuse the other of making so much noise that the actors are inaudible. Wits then shout that the fault is the actors'; if only they would be quiet the stalls could hear the gallery and the gallery the stalls. How the actors stick it, I don't know. They are very good-humoured, but the joke must have palled for them even before it palled for the intelligent section of the audience. My friend tells me it is no longer amusing to go. I seem to see a warning and a moral in this story. Intelligence ridicules, as it must, the grosser crudities of patriotism and sentimentalism, but this sane and necessary work may easily be ruined by the undiscriminating hooliganism of people who love a row for its own sake.

* * *

Last Tuesday night's meeting in Finsbury Town Hall to appeal for support for the new birth-control clinic in Islington was a very remarkable affair indeed. Remarkable, not only because the audience was large and the platform varied and distinguished—the speakers included Dr. Edith Summerskill, Rebecca West, Hannen Swaffer and Frank Horrabin—but more because of the candid and sensible discussion before a work-a-day mixed audience of a subject which only a few years ago was scarcely mentionable outside Barts. or Bloomsbury. There were the usual religious objectors who thought birth control "unnatural," as their predecessors thought chloroform unnatural not so many years ago. There were shrewder objectors who wanted to know—and were not quite fairly told—how far birth-control methods were fool-proof. But there were no objections to serious discussion of the topic, and the success of the evening was a woman speaker who told in straightforward language the story of her own married life and her experience at the Kensington clinic. With public opinion so far advanced it is almost incredible that there should be only five clinics in the whole London area where women who cannot afford expensive fees can obtain expert birth-control advice. But we are apparently on the move now; in addition to the new Islington clinic I hear this week that a new voluntary clinic is being opened in Woolwich.

* * *

I see that John Strachey has been arrested by the American Federal Authorities in the middle of his lecture tour. The charge appears to be purely technical. He is accused of not abiding by the words of the declaration which every visitor to the United States must sign in order to receive a visa. As John Strachey is a Communist in everything but party membership, the charge that he is in favour of upsetting the American constitution should be easy to maintain. He is a popular lecturer in the United States: he had lecture bookings in about forty cities to large audiences of every kind. The Hearst press has been out for his blood ever since he arrived, asking in headlines: Who let Strachey in? How did he crash the gate? In view of Mr. Bennett's recent remarkable testimony to Strachey's influence on himself (he called him incidentally, I think, the most profound thinker of the age), perhaps Canada will welcome him? I doubt it. The question I am inclined to ask is whether Strachey arranged this arrest with the American Government in order to ensure as good a sale in the States for his new book, *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*, as he had for his last one, *The Coming Struggle for Power*.

* * *

I hope the Soviet Government will take notice of the appeals for the reprieve of Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. One of the most welcome impressions I had in Russia two years ago was that the Bolsheviks did mind about preserving the beauties of the past as well as about creating a new civilisation. Good pictures are admirably cared for in Leningrad and Moscow. And I shall never forget the joy and relief I felt in Kiev. There is excitement and often beauty in machinery and in concrete building. But nothing so impressed me as the contrast between Dnieperstroy—the completely new town with its monstrous dam, and Kiev, the ancient religious capital. Their contrasting beauty represented the two sides of Russia. The frescoes in Saint Sophia are as wonderful as the newspapers say; they date from a period before the Mongol invasion, when artistic culture was already far advanced in the Ukraine. And the voice I heard chanting in Saint Sophia is a permanent memory.

* * *

Two months ago, when I left off smoking by inclination, not by effort of will, I promised to report any lapse. Well,

I tried smoking a few nights ago to help me over a bad patch. I smoked three cigarettes and detested them. I am still a non-smoker, because I do not like smoking.

* * *

This quotation from the *Scottish Daily Express* moves me to astonishment. America must be an odder country than I had realised.

Mrs. Nancy Mary Ann Trammel West, who gained wide publicity last summer when she said she was "eighty years of age and never had been kissed," has died at her home near Topton, North Carolina. She was the mother of fourteen children, including triplets and twins.

* * *

A friend in America sends me the story of an agonised Buchmanite who could not compete in a group of confessing comrades. At length he confessed: "Last week I blew my nose on the bath-towel."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5s. for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Mr. P. MORSE.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Let us then start a movement. I will call it "Back to the gooseberry bush," and I shall expect all my followers to take an oath to give as little information as they truthfully can to the young and to leave the most mysterious things of life steeped in the awe and dignity which naturally belong to them.—Article in *Sunday Dispatch.*

Corporal punishment is a fine mental and physical tonic, and the more there is the better for the community—and for our future.—Letter in *Sunday Dispatch.*

After the performance he [Mr. George Robey] confessed that he had "slipped up" occasionally.

But *Henry IV* is a safe play for such an experiment. Only schoolboys know all the words. And Robey's method of speaking the lines conversationally instead of attempting the metre of blank verse covered up slips which would otherwise have been obvious.—*Daily Herald.*

One of the saddest things about Paris is that they are taking no trouble about their evening shoes just now. They will tell you that it is because the skirts are too long for the shoes to be noticed. . . . —*News Chronicle.*

Norwood Fight. Socialist Mixes Peace and Religion.—Headlines in *Morning Post.*

Never wear shoes or a wrist-watch if you want to be successful in business. They are too effeminate. Try a pocket watch and boots for a change, and notice the difference in your earning power.—Letter in *Daily Mirror.*

Hours later the message reached Mr. Cameron, the locust ranger, who is an Old Marlburian, and he took prompt measures to succour Lady Young and Dr. Kerby.—*Times.*

"You can give an assurance to every mother in the land that by the grace of God, using you as a medium, never again will the war bugles blow to summon men—some fathers and brothers—into battle, but that under our fig trees we can go through our worship and adoration, we can express our reverence and adoration and our faith and get an assurance in the evening of our days of the reward that is given to us before the conclusion of the day."—From speech by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, quoted by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, as reported in *Daily Herald.*

Afterwards, during convalescence, he was induced to see an alienist. His strange conduct was attributed to a psychological condition scientifically called "behaviourism."—*Daily Express.*

The loss of a husband invariably brings out the best qualities of the woman.—From a "Charitable Appeal."

FORGETTING

A LIST of articles lost by railway travellers and now on sale at a great London station has been published during the week, and many people who read it have been astonished at the absent-mindedness of their fellows. If statistical records were available on the subject, however, I doubt whether it would be found that absent-mindedness is common. It is the efficiency rather than the inefficiency of human memory that compels my wonder. Modern man remembers even telephone numbers. He remembers the addresses of his friends. He remembers the dates of good vintages. He remembers appointments for lunch and dinner. His memory is crowded with the names of actors and actresses and cricketers and footballers and murderers. He can tell you what the weather was like in a long-past August, and the name of the provincial hotel at which he had a vile meal during the summer. In his ordinary life, again, he remembers almost everything that he is expected to remember. How many men in all London forget a single item of their clothing when dressing in the morning? Not one in a hundred. Perhaps not one in ten thousand. How many of them forget to shut the front door when leaving the house? Scarcely more. And so it goes on through the day, almost everybody remembering to do the right thing at the right moment till it is time to go to bed, and then the ordinary man seldom forgets to turn off the lights before going upstairs.

There are, it must be admitted, some matters in regard to which the memory works with less than its usual perfection. It is only a very methodical man, I imagine, who can always remember to take the medicine his doctor has prescribed for him. This is the more surprising because medicine should be one of the easiest things to remember. As a rule, it is supposed to be taken before, during, or after meals, and the meal itself should be a reminder of it. The fact remains, however, that few but the moral giants remember to take their medicine regularly. Certain psychologists tell us that we forget things because we wish to forget them, and it may be it is because of their antipathy to pills and potions that many people fail to remember them at the appointed hours. This does not explain, however, how it is that a lifelong devotee of medicines like myself is as forgetful of them as those who take them most unwillingly. The very prospect of a new and widely advertised cure-all delights me. Yet, even if I have the stuff in my pocket, I forget about it as soon as the hour approaches at which I ought to swallow it. Chemists make their fortunes out of the medicines people forget to take.

The commonest form of forgetfulness, I suppose, occurs in the matter of posting letters. So common is it that I am always reluctant to trust a departing visitor to post an important letter. So little do I rely on his memory that I put him on his oath before handing the letter to him. As for myself, anyone who asks me to post a letter is a poor judge of character. Even if I carry the letter in my hand I am always past the first pillar-box before I remember that I ought to have posted it. Weary of holding it in my hand, I then put it for safety into one of my pockets and forget all about it. After that, it has an unadventurous life till a long chain of circumstances leads to a number of embarrassing questions being asked, and I am compelled to produce the evidence of my guilt from my pocket. This, it might be thought, must be due to a lack of interest in other people's letters; but this cannot be the explanation, for I forget to post some even of the few letters that I myself remember to write.

As for articles left in railway-trains and in taxis, I am no great delinquent in such matters. I can remember almost anything except books and walking-sticks, and I can often remember even books. Walking-sticks I find it quite impossible to keep. I have an old-fashioned taste for them, and I buy them frequently, but no sooner do I pay a visit to a friend's house or go a journey in a train, then another stick

is on its way into the world of the lost. I dare not carry an umbrella for fear of losing it. To go through life without ever having lost an umbrella—has even the grimmest-jawed umbrella-carrier ever achieved this?

Few of us, however, have lost much property on our travels through forgetfulness. The ordinary man usually arrives at his destination with all his bags and trunks safe. The list of articles lost in trains during the year suggests that it is the young rather than the adult who forget things, and that sportsmen have worse memories than their ordinary serious-minded fellows. A considerable number of footballs and cricket-bats, for instance, were forgotten. This is easy to understand, for boys, returning from the games, have their imaginations still filled with the visions of the playing-field, and their heads are among the stars—or their hearts in their boots—as they recall their exploits or their errors. They are abstracted from the world outside them. Memories prevent them from remembering to do such small prosaic things as take the ball or the bat with them when they leave the train. For the rest of the day, they are citizens of dreamland. The same may be said, no doubt, of anglers who forget their fishing-rods. Anglers are generally said—I do not know with what justification—to be the most imaginative of men—and the man who is inventing magnificent lies on the journey home after a day's fishing is bound to be a little absent-minded in his behaviour. The fishing-rod of reality is forgotten by him as he daydreams over the feats of the fishing-rod of Utopia. His loss of memory is really a tribute to the intensity of his enjoyment in thinking about his day's fishing. He may forget his fishing-rod, as the poet may forget to post a letter, because his mind is filled with matter more glorious. Absent-mindedness of this kind seems to me all but a virtue. The absent-minded man is often a man who is making the best of life and therefore has no time to remember the mediocre. Who would have trusted Socrates or Coleridge to post a letter? They had souls above such things.

The question whether the possession of a good memory is altogether desirable has often been discussed, and men with fallible memories have sometimes tried to make out a case for their superiority. A man, they say, who is a perfect remembering machine is seldom a man of the first intelligence, and they quote various cases of children or men who had marvellous memories and who yet had no intellect to speak of. I imagine, however, that on the whole the great writers and the great composers of music have been men with exceptional powers of memory. The poets I have known have had better memories than the stockbrokers I have known. Memory, indeed, is half the substance of their art. On the other hand, statesmen seem to have extraordinarily bad memories. Let two statesmen attempt to recall the same event—what happened, for example, at some Cabinet meeting—and each of them will tell you that the other's story is so inaccurate that either he has a memory like a sieve or is an audacious perverter of the truth. The frequency with which the facts of the autobiographies and speeches of statesmen are challenged suggests that the world has not yet begun to produce ideal statesmen—men who, like great poets, have the genius of memory and of intellect.

At the same time, ordinarily good memory is so common that we regard a man who does not possess it as eccentric. I have heard of a farmer who, having offered to take the baby out in a perambulator, was tempted by the sunny morning to pause on his journey and slip into a public house for a glass of beer. Leaving the infant outside, he disappeared through the door of a saloon bar. A little later his wife had to do some shopping which took her past the sleeping baby. Indignant at her husband's behaviour, she decided to teach him a lesson. She wheeled away the perambulator, picturing to herself his terror when he would come out and find the baby gone. She arrived home, anticipating with angry relish the white face and quivering lips that would soon appear with the news that the baby had been stolen. What was her vexation, however, when just before lunch her husband came in smiling cheerfully and asking: "Well, my dear, what's for lunch to-day?" having forgotten all about the baby and the fact that he had taken it out with him. How many men below the rank of a philosopher would be capable of such absent-mindedness as this? Most of us, I fear, are born with prosaicably efficient memories, and are incapable even of forgetting a fishing-rod in a railway train. Y. Y.

WISE WORMS

THE larvae of a large number of beetles make their diet exclusively on wood. They live within the trunks of trees, and from the time when as small grubs they penetrate the bark to the time when, two or three years later, they finally emerge as perfect beetles they sense nothing of the world beyond the tree-stem through which they monotonously eat their way. If we could follow with an X-ray photograph the winding path of one of these beetle grubs, we should find that it began small, a mere thread, and that it gradually grew wider in diameter as the larva increased in size. The tunnel that the creature had made would be filled up in the track of the advancing grub with the wood-waste which had been excreted; this would be packed tight in one continuous line filling all the tunnel. Little nourishment can be extracted from wood, and so the beetle larva is forced to eat most of its time. As there is nothing else to do, this is no great hardship.

The larva of the Great Capricorn beetle spends the greater part of three years inside an oak tree. When it is full grown it is about two and a half inches long and five-eighths of an inch across at the thickest part of the thorax. It is an ivory white, and almost naked except for a few short hairs. It is a segmented, muscular tube with a mouth at one end with gouging mandibles and strong muscles to drive them, an intestine and an anus. The true legs are vestigial, mere tiny, black excrescences, and are of no use in walking. The grub moves in its burrow by means of a number of four-sided facets, bristling with rough protuberances, which are placed both ventrally and dorsally on the segments. These are its ambulacra. When the larva wants to progress it expands its hinder ambulacra, both on back and belly, and contracts the front ones. Having moved forward, it expands the forward ambulacra and contracts the hinder ones. It is only adapted for movement within the tube, and cannot move on a flat surface. This larva has no eyes, it is quite blind. It shows no sign of being able to hear. It is quite indifferent to smell. It can presumably taste its woody food, but can find little variety during its three years of oak diet. It is sensible to touch. Compared with the larvae of other insects which live in a less secluded retreat it appears strangely degenerate. The organs of sense are almost entirely lacking and the legs are mere vestiges.

It is not difficult to suppose that this creature has taken on its specialised and degenerate form in response to its environment; as the generations have passed, the senses, which were of no use within the dark silence of the tree, have degenerated, and the legs, designed in the first place for crawling over a surface, have withered into vestiges and been replaced by the ambulacra on back and belly. This on the face of it is not an unreasonable supposition, but if we examine further the life habits of this grub we find qualities upon which its survival is altogether dependent and which it is hard to imagine as being derived from a purely mechanistic response to environment.

During the greater part of the larval life the grub eats its winding passage through the hard heart of the oak; it never comes near to the surface of the bark, but keeps safely remote from wood-peckers and other insect-eating birds. If it were led by chance only, it would in the long course of its twistings and turnings in that dark, silent burrow be likely to come to the surface more than once. A guiding instinct keeps it safely buried in the interior of the stem. When, however, the time draws near for the larva to change into its pupal state, it eats

its way to the very margin of the bark, and will sometimes eat its way right through to the outside. This is its time of greatest danger, and it runs a very real risk of being eaten by a wood-pecker. Why does it do this? For the good reason that the beetle, after the metamorphosis, is incapable of eating its way through hard wood. If the pupa were to be formed anywhere but at the extreme margin of the bark, the emerged beetle would die imprisoned.

The behaviour of the *senseless* grub in preparing for the pupal state is worth noticing. When it has eaten its way close to the bark it makes a pupal-chamber three to four inches in length, about an inch wide and three-fifths of an inch deep. The sides of this chamber it rasps with its mandibles, making a kind of velvety substance from the torn fibre, which will afford soft-lying for the tender pupa. Across the outward-lying end of the cell it makes, from an excretion of its stomach which hardens as it dries, a chalky shield which serves as a protection to the otherwise unguarded end. Having made these preparations for the safety and comfort of the pupa, the grub, whose sole experience hitherto has been that of eating in a dark and silent tunnel, has the unvarying good sense to lay itself down with its head outwards towards the bark. The grub, which is soft and flexible, can, of course, turn easily in any direction within the cell, but the emerged beetle cannot move in any direction except that in which it lies. The beetle is encased in hard plates and provided with stiff wing-cases, which cannot bend. Should the grub make a mistake and lie head inwards, the beetle, when its metamorphosis is completed, would be unable to turn round and would perish entombed within the cell. The grub never does make a mistake; it always lays itself down the right way, so that when the beetle emerges it has merely to push aside the chalky shield, which is easily dislodged from inside by its mandibles, and walk out into the world of sunshine which it can now see for the first time.

No one can imagine that this blind and deaf, worm-like grub can have any knowledge of its future life as a beetle, nor can it have any knowledge of the outside world. Is its behaviour the result of racial experience, and does this experience find its being and expression in the degenerate sense organs? Does the larva perceive in its darkness and deafness and dumbness and scentlessness which end of the cell is which and so place itself as the result of stimuli acting through sense memories? The thought is not unthinkable, though it is not one which easily commends itself as probable. If we follow this line of supposition, we must imagine earlier generations some of whom made mistakes and who lay down for their pupal sleep with their heads in the wrong direction. On the law of chances 50 per cent. would lie one way, 50 per cent. would lie the other; 50 per cent. would perish, entombed and unable to emerge. Those which did emerge, we would have to suppose, would pass on a tendency to their offspring to lie down in the pupal chamber with their heads outward. And so in the course of numberless generations, the argument must run, the inherited habit would become an unerring instinct in the grub. This thought, I repeat, is not unthinkable, and it affords a line of reasoning which is held to be true by many biologists. The only alternative solution would be to postulate a life inspiration, a life wisdom, within the grub which is innate and not acquired.

E. L. GRANT WATSON

Correspondence

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

SIR,—Every week we read of further extensions of the programme of arrangements for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the King's accession to the throne which is called "the Jubilee" (a word which according to Leviticus xxv was used by the Almighty to Moses in connection with a *fiftieth* anniversary). There are to be services, receptions, banquets, balls, reviews, processions and various other functions. Many people like an opportunity for jollification and pageantry, but no one wants it to be overdone. A suspicion is growing after the rather excessive amount of display and publicity given to the Duke of Kent's wedding that the powers that be, i.e., the Government and Court officials, are engineering monarchical demonstrations for political purposes; the intention being to show the world how strong and popular our monarchy is in days when so many monarchs have joined the unemployed, to please the populace with the glitter of ceremonial and military pomp and to teach a salutary lesson to any subversive factions which may exist within the realm. Some reflected glory may also fall on the National Government, whose members are not likely to be found in back seats on any of the occasions. This is all very well, but a rejoicing people are apt to become a little suspicious when they are commanded to rejoice overmuch.

The Prince Consort having died in 1861, there was no question of any celebrations on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession in 1862. But it is unlikely that even in happier circumstances she would have consented to any spceial public rejoicings. Neither in 1752 nor in 1785 are any public celebrations recorded as having taken place on the twenty-fifth anniversaries of George II's and George III's accession. These are not reasons why there should not be celebrations this year. But they make it quite clear that the occasion is being used in an unprecedented manner.

There is, however, an important consideration which, so far as an outsider can see, hardly seems to be taken into account at all by these eager organisers. What about the arduous and exacting duty which is being imposed on the chief and central personage—the King himself? That King George enjoys and revels in ceremonial display and brilliant functions, and has therefore been the prime mover in arranging these celebrations, may be dismissed at once by anyone who has the faintest knowledge of the King's character. He has never in his life shirked a public ceremony and has been exemplary in the performance of every public duty he has felt it incumbent on him to carry out. But let no one suppose that donning different tight and heavy uniforms, receiving deputations, driving for hours in procession, greeting crowds, attending formal ceremonies and being present at reviews is either an easy or pleasant duty. Even public acclamation can pall by constant repetition. For the central figure, who although a King is after all a human being, it requires sustained effort; it is exhausting physically and wearisome mentally. Has full consideration been taken of the effect of the protracted arrangements on one who has passed, not so very long ago, through a serious illness? Is it not possible that, suppressing his own feelings and subordinating his own inclinations, he is displaying his usual public spirit by acquiescing in all these demonstrations which are being arranged for him and forced on him by his advisers? No one can tell, because the King will take very good care that no one shall know.

But the facts on the surface are obvious to everybody who can realise the burden of strain and effort which is being imposed on the King and who can understand that modern methods of publicity, advertisement and transport can collect crowds and increase the range and weight of these demonstrations to an unprecedented degree.

The responsibility for this lack of consideration rests with the Government, who also do not seem to recognise that a people's gratitude can well be expressed in less ostentatious ways and that exaggeration and excess can easily lead to undesirable reaction.

VIGILANS

THE RUSSIAN FAMINE

SIR,—Having just read *Russia's Iron Age* by Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, I turned with special interest to Mrs. Webb's review of the book in your last issue. Like everything that Mrs. Webb writes, the review was a great pleasure to read, as the revelation of a mind perpetually open to new ideas. But I venture to doubt whether her criticism of the statistical basis of Mr. Chamberlin's estimates as to the famine 1932–33 is just to him.

Mrs. Webb states that having "ascertained the mortality statistics in *one* of the 70,000 villages in the U.S.S.R. during certain months only" Mr. Chamberlin "calmly extends these deaths to three or four millions."

This is a misunderstanding of Mr. Chamberlin's argument. It is true that on page 85 he gives mortality statistics for one village for four months, but on page 88 he makes it plain that his estimate of deaths through the famine rests not on this village, but on far more

extensive enquiries, statistical and other. "The average mortality rate which I found with monotonous regularity in the districts I personally visited was about 10 per cent."

On pages 367 and 369 Mr. Chamberlin gives a fuller account of the range of his investigations and incidentally mentions another village where the death rate was not 10 per cent. but 30 per cent. Of course, the 10 per cent. reported as gathered over many districts as well as the range of the famine rest ultimately upon Mr. Chamberlin's own statements. But there is nothing in his general outlook or in the rest of his book to cast doubt upon him as a trustworthy witness. On the other hand, Mr. Chamberlin gives as the reason why he was unable to observe the famine during its continuance and could only judge of it afterwards, that during the whole Spring and Summer of 1933 no foreign correspondents were allowed to visit the stricken regions. Unless this categorical statement can be denied, it is proof that the Soviet rulers had something worse than usual to conceal.

May I add one word of probably unwanted advice to all who sincerely desire to establish a Socialist economic system in this country? This is that they should, having read Mr. Chamberlin's book and particularly the chapters on "Government by Propaganda," "Government by Terror" and "Old Russia in New Masks," in their own interests make their case for Socialism on its merits and resolutely turn their backs on Russia. The example of Russia will not help them. W. H. BEVERIDGE

3 Elm Court, Middle Temple, E.C.4.

THE INDIAN CENSORSHIP

SIR,—Your readers will probably be interested in a little incident which shows something of the working of British imperialism in India, and especially its insane fear of anything that savours of Socialism.

On my return from England last July, I was informed by my travel agents that four of my books were detained by the Calcutta Customs for closer examination of their contents. These were: (1) *Brusski*, a Soviet peasant novel, by Panferov; (2) *Lenin*, by Stalin; (3) *Austrian Democracy under Fire*, by Otto Bauer; and (4) *Days with Lenin*, by Maxim Gorky. So far as I know, they are not proscribed, and there is no reason why they should be. For nearly six months I was in complete ignorance of their fate, and it is only lately that I have been told, on inquiry, that three of the four have been confiscated, Bauer's pamphlet being the only one to be regarded innocuous enough for Indian consumption.

I do not feel like commenting on such a ridiculous piece of interference. I have lived some of the happiest years of my life in England. I count English men and women among my best friends. I love England, her sights and sounds, more than I care to tell. But I cannot help, hating with all the hate of which I am capable, the abominable relationship which exists between our two countries to-day.

I am enclosing a copy of the correspondence with my travel agents. H. N. MUKERJEE

Andhra University, Waltair (India).

A HOAX

SIR,—May I correct an impression, to which an article in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION may have given rise, by saying that to the best of my knowledge the letter published in the *Boston Transcript* advocating the banning of "The Mikado" on various grounds was intended as a hoax? It was written in a mock-serious vein and was exceedingly timely, since the mayor had just banned *Within the Gates* to almost everyone's irritation, and because the D'Oyly Garte Company was enjoying such a particularly successful run. ALEXANDER W. WILLIAMS

Boston, Massachusetts.

RUSSIAN GOLD

SIR,—I noticed in last week's "London Diary" you published a reference to Mr. Doran's speech concerning the smuggling into England and subsequent disposal of the Russian Crown jewels.

You defended Mr. Francis Meynell handsomely, and as a granddaughter and admirer of George Lansbury I should like to mention that he had nothing to do with the transaction from start to finish. A sum of £70,000 was offered to the *Daily Herald*, but Mr. Lansbury and his co-directors refused it. If any money was subsequently accepted and used it was without his knowledge. I quote here a few words he wrote in 1928:

> I do not think it is good to receive money and orders from outside our own nation in secret; but money received and spent openly is quite legitimate.

ESMÉ LANSBURY

16 Uphill Drive, Mill Hill, N.W.7.

Miscellany

M.P.s AND COVENT GARDEN

WHEN the hundred and fifty odd M.P.s signed the letter to the *Times* last week protesting that, in spite of the fact that this was the Silver Jubilee of the King's reign, most of the artists engaged for the Covent Garden Opera season were foreigners, no doubt they thought they were on a good thing. It must have seemed quite a safe complaint and one that would do them great credit in the eyes of their electorates. Little did they think they were making a perfect exhibition of ignorance and fatuousness. It was easy to expose them, and the letters printed by the *Times* on the two days following the appearance of their ridiculous letter must have quickly enlightened them, for some of them are now throwing bouquets to Mr. Geoffrey Toye, the managing director of the Covent Garden Syndicate. I should like to know how many of those gentlemen signing the letter ever patronise the opera at Covent Garden, or anywhere else, and I should be much surprised if they numbered a dozen.

The protest, however, may have one good result, not at all intended by the signatories. It will draw public attention to the fact that the greatest city in the greatest Empire in the world has no National Theatre or Opera House, whereas for hundreds of years the principal European countries have had subsidised opera houses, by means of which they have developed in each country a national art of opera and trained large numbers of national operatic artists. Of course, the directors of the Opera Syndicate in their letters to the press have laid stress on the fact that, even so, the proportion of British to foreign artists engaged at Covent Garden is numerically high. This is the easiest and the safest reply to make, but of course it deceives nobody who knows anything about opera. By this I do not mean that it is a false statement; on the contrary, it is absolutely true and it is quite enough to demolish the hundred and fifty-eight M.P.s who in their far from sublime ignorance rush blindly into a subject of which they know absolutely nothing. We nearly all know that anything can be proved by statistics and few are able to analyse the statistics set before them. The figures showing the enormous preponderance of British artists employed at Covent Garden are arrived at by including all the chorus and orchestra, who are practically all British. Naturally, in an opera like *Die Walküre*, with a cast of about six and an orchestra of about one hundred and twenty and a chorus of about twenty, it is only the six principals who are or who need to be foreigners, so that in this opera, for example, the British preponderate overwhelmingly. But this disguises the fact that the principals are indispensable and could not be superseded by British singers without artistic sacrifice, whereas we could easily replace the orchestra or the chorus with a foreign one.

What we are getting at Covent Garden at the annual international season is the fruit of hundreds of years of tradition and training at the Vienna, Berlin, Prague, Munich, Milan, Rome, Paris, etc., State opera houses. We have absolutely nothing to put in their place. Naturally there are born in the British Dominions singers and musicians as naturally endowed as anywhere else, but whereas almost every English and British singer seems to think (in the absence of any tradition to the contrary) that one has only to open one's mouth to sing perfectly, and only to stand up and behave as one does in the lounge of a hotel or the drawing-room of a house to act perfectly, the Continental singers know by virtue of their living tradition and high standard of daily operatic activity in their numerous State or municipal theatres that the pure unadulterated genius with which they were born is not enough

to make them completely equipped and satisfying operatic singers.

Further, it never seems to occur to our politicians or public men who complain of foreigners at Covent Garden, that actually we are getting our annual season of opera at Covent Garden at European expense. Would any Parliament grant a subsidy to a National Theatre or Opera House in London? There has never been the slightest sign of it, yet our M.P.s do not think it below their dignity to enjoy opera at Covent Garden by the charity of the reigning princes, dukes and other Governments of European States who, in the past, have paid for the maintenance and development of the operatic art out of their revenues. One may agree this far with the M.P.s who signed the *Times* letter, that it is rather humiliating to be so dependent on foreign artists for operatic performance, but what about operatic production? Should we not be equally ashamed that since Purcell we have had no composers of opera, and no production of opera as well as no performers worth mentioning—apart from such an isolated phenomenon as Melba, who was an Australian who received her operatic training abroad? If we, as a nation, have for two hundred years under Puritan influence frowned upon all public support of the art of music and especially of opera, we must not complain that we have properly scotched opera in this country and are now devoid of any opera of our own.

How strange the situation seems in the eyes of foreigners is illustrated by a letter I have received this week from a business man now domiciled in this country but of Russian origin. He writes:

> I take the liberty of inviting your kind attention to the fact that opera in Russia developed not only because it was State subsidised but simply because music in Russia was fostered on the same scale as public houses in England. If it were possible to enjoy music in England as easily as it is to enter a public house, the masses would appreciate opera. . . .

This brings me to a second important point which is nearly always overlooked, and it is this, that music has flourished in a country almost exactly in proportion to the degree in which the government and civic life was decentralised. The superiority of Germany and Italy to France, for example, in the development of all musical activity is, I am convinced, mainly due to the fact that until comparatively recently Germany and Italy have both been a collection of states with separate capitals united in a federation which did not destroy their independent life. In France, on the contrary, everything since the reign of Louis XIV has been centralised in Paris. The other large cities of France have sunk to the level of provincial towns with all the inertia of inhabitants conscious that they are in a backwater. England is in the same situation. There ought to be a Scottish capital, a Welsh capital, and each of the great counties should have its own centre. At present London, like Paris, drains the life-blood away from the whole of the rest of the country, so that even a National Theatre and Opera House in London would not be a solution of our difficulties, or be sufficient in itself to develop a national operatic tradition. But the organisers of the National Theatre movement are, I believe, aware of this danger. They intend the National Theatre—if we ever get it—to provide the nucleus of a permanent travelling company that will in time, it is hoped, be housed in subsidised municipal theatres all over the country.

This over-centralisation has many other bad effects, and I believe that in time its general economic disadvantages will compel some sensible Government to find means by which the drive towards London from every part of the country will be stopped and the population distributed. One of the worst results of a seven million capital in a population of forty odd millions is that the pressure of people sends up the prices of land and buildings in the capital to heights prohibitive of all genuine enterprise and offers exorbitant profits to those who are merely out to fleece the public. It is for this reason that theatre and opera prices are beyond the means of all but the rich in London, whereas in a German capital (not a miserable brick-heap of an English provincial town) good seats can be obtained for the Munich, Stuttgart, Dresden, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Weimar, Breslau, Hamburg, etc., etc., State theatres and opera houses at little more than West End cinema prices. Here is something for our one hundred and fifty odd M.P.s to think about.

W. J. TURNER

THREE FILMS

David Copperfield. *Palace Theatre.*
The Man from Folies Bergère. *London Pavilion.*
Dood Water. *The Film Society.*

At the time when publishers were in hue-and-cry after the manuscript of Dickens' *Life of Christ*, there was the authentic and touching story of an American book-king who at one point made a particularly tempting offer: not only did his figures dwarf the last man's, but he also proposed to undertake the book "in a spirit of reverence and *con amore*." *David Copperfield* has received this same awed treatment on the screen. Sentimental mists, a mellow fruitfulness, pervade every inch of this all-star, studiedly Dickensian production "proudly presented" by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. One doubts whether any British studio could have done Dickens so proudly—or so proud: we should probably only have succeeded in politely telling-er-England about it. Whereas this lavish yet restrained telling-the-world effect from Hollywood is cunningly and flatteringly successful. For nobody must imagine for one moment that the film is American in anything but the colour of the money spent on it and the excellence of its direction, mechanics, cutting—making. The aforesaid spirit of reverence includes as attractive a picture of England as anyone could wish, quite a few lines of Dickens (and Hugh Walpole), and a mixed cast of English and American actors who—very successfully—have strained every nerve to achieve or retain English accents. Only two characters at times find certain details of the older language too slippery for them; and one of these is himself so talented a comedian that his Micawber would have been almost equally familiar and intelligible—to David Cawperfield and to all of us—if he had expressed himself in the purest Sioux. He does not run away with the picture only because the entire cast—and what a cast!—acts more than admirably. Rich and sympathetic as his performance is, and despite its advantage in comedy, it cannot quite outshine the 'umble perfection of Roland Young's Uriah Heep or the fine impersonations of Aunt Betsey, David as a child, and Nurse Peggotty, by Edna May Oliver, Freddie Bartholomew and Jessie Ralph. And yet every flicker of comedy was needed as relief in this very long film, nine-tenths of it harrowing to a degree. Such continual pathos, such frailty, such hardness of heart; such frequent transports of joy, affection and gratitude!

David Copperfield, the book, is well over three hundred thousand words in length: the film, even though it "shows" almost two and a half hours, is naturally forced to pick out and portray only the dramatic high spots and the depths of human suffering. It does so, moreover, with a truly merciless Dickensian relish—converting itself as a result into a positive switchback of the emotions. And none of your inarticulate modern misery, either: no mere gulp, muttered anguish of the stalwart, prolonged pause—till life becomes just a bowl of cherries. In those days strong men not only wept and whipped their offspring; they looked upon speech as a conductor of feeling. These people, always so weak, so put upon, so very *little*, are involved in at least five frightful storms, three fogs, two fatal travails, a vicious caning, and innumerable deaths seen or recounted: an only too true and frantic procession of events interspersed with glad reunions, outbursts of manly gratitude and all love's hopes, pangs and partings. No wonder, therefore, that straight comedy (W. C. Fields) and crooked villainy (Roland Young) divert and distract the heart from a life which—as General Sherman plainly said of war—is Hell. The masterpieces of "depressing" modern fiction are sunny by comparison.

Gay but no masterpiece is Maurice Chevalier's new film at the London Pavilion. Its title, *The Man from Folies Bergère*, limps for a start, and most of its "sophisticated" dialogue creaks on its hinges: yet Chevalier's assurance and vigour pull the whole ramshackle edifice together—sufficiently at any rate to display the film's good points and to provide adequate entertainment. Its best point is Chevalier himself, the others are all reminiscent of past perfections: an echo, in the plot, of the unforgettable *Guardsman;* a memory called up, by Maurice as Frenchman, aristocrat and lover, of Menjou in the days when his films, from *A Woman of Paris* to *Fashions in Love*, were the delicate slick summit of a certain type of cinema; thirdly, a vision of the early music-hall Chevalier before the gestures became stereotyped at all. In this film, more robust than Menjou in a Menjou part, forceful and friendly, he gives an excellent performance. Opposite him Merle Oberon, lovely and limited as ever, tries one after another various interpretations of her part, in decorative contrast to his sustained and careless verve. Add to the mistakes and love-makings of this pair the usual Hollywood angles on beauty-choruses: legs "shot" from below, elaborate drill patterns like unfolding flowers "shot" from above, then a sudden brief indication of fresh, picked faces—and the whole thing classifies automatically as passable pseudo-Lubitsch. The gyrations on a vast and expanding Folies Bergère stage seem more machine-made even than before: can it be that the film-kings are tiring of this particular game of draughts? Certainly at the present rate by 1937 Hollywood will have unwittingly debunked even the attractions of regimented wriggling and of the female shape itself. But presumably by that time all celluloid will have been suffused with the colour that has already swamped the "shorts" and the day when it ceases to be an eyesore should by then be in sight.

At present we have colour only in such unwarrantable aggressions as *Show Kids*, which preceded Chevalier in the same programme (the low-water mark of such productions), or, already far advanced towards its ultimate perfection, in an advertisement-cartoon, *The Ship of Ether*, which the Film Society showed on March 10th. So enchanting was the chromatic sense and so intelligent the handling of this Gasparcolor medium that, in view of what is to come, it may seem almost feasible, as well as wise, to bow the head beneath the threatened deluge of colour-photography in its raw, unsightly, adolescent stage with a better grace than one supported the first rumbling stutter of the talkies.

The main ingredients of these three films are, respectively, words, gesture and colour; and the strong point of the Film Society's principal exhibit in the same programme—the Dutch picture, *Dood Water*—was its music, composed by Gronostay and conducted by Mengelberg. "Symphonic in texture and characteristically Dutch"—in any case, superb—it blended right into the visions on the screen, to form shifting and continually satisfying patterns of a kind which only the ballet can as well contrive. In this particular case the photography, though excellent, fell short of the musical interpretation. But what a magnificent promise the youngest of the arts holds out for the future! It will end by containing them all, one inside the other, like a Chinese box puzzle.

JOHN MARKS

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Major Barbara" at the Old Vic

Not all the skill of the Old Vic company can dissolve the contradictions of the last act of *Major Barbara*. What can be done with this vigorous but outmoded play they do. The production is high-spirited and accurate; Miss Mary Newcombe as Barbara is supported by a brilliant cast. Lady Britomart (Miss Ruth Maitland), it is true, tripped once or twice over her immense perorations, which require the breathing technique of an opera singer, and Mr. Cecil Trouncer as Undershaft was a little unreal in the first act: the honeyed syllables which recall the Inquisitor in *Saint Joan* dripped all too easily off his tongue, but he warmed up later on and developed from an actor into a person. Whether he was the Undershaft of Shaw's imagination or not merits discussion; but there can be no doubt whatever about Mr. Maurice Evans's transcendent performance as Adolphus Cusins. His Cusins is making stage history. Among the minor, or less voluble characters, my choice (regretfully passing over Charles Lomax, Stephen and Sarah, Rummy Mitchens and Peter Shirley, who are all runners-up) would be Miss Ruth Hermansen as Mrs. Baines. The beaming glance, the cooing voice, and the obvious efficiency of the lady salvationist are exactly, deliciously right.

"Glory Be" at the Phoenix.

The sexual impulses of religious fanatics have long ago passed from the psycho-analyst's care into that of the box-office manager. How certain we were when Mr. Ion Swinley had doffed his black felt hat and asked a blessing on the farmer's house that Mr. Ridley was not going to let the farmer's pretty daughter take her curtain without earning it. The fact that she was engaged to an international and, alas, heathen footballer could hardly be expected to weigh overmuch against passages from the Song of Solomon, delivered with appropriate gestures by the revivalist when his host had gone to bed. But Llewellyn Evans had a past, which Josh Blain, the footballer, planned to reveal with Evidence at his next big meeting. So far, so crudely entertaining, but an Anglican parson intervenes and delicately suggests that Josh, if he persists, will cause unnecessary suffering to hundreds of people whose lives have been made the happier, indirectly, by the preacher's influence. A pretty problem for a footballer whose girl's life may be wrecked by this humbug. Mr. Ridley declines the opening, firmly. Josh is adamant, but Llewellyn is able to hypnotise the Evidence in time, and when called upon she blandly denies that he is the father of her child. Josh and the audience are in despair, when Ruby's feminine instinct comes to the rescue, and she renounces her infatuation to provide a happy ending. It was a pity that Mr. Ridley left his little problem high and dry, for the third act, without it, is dreadfully unsatisfactory. Otherwise the piece is goodish melodrama, in which Mr. S. Victor Stanley, Mr. Allan Rose and Miss Edna Davies distinguish themselves mightily in short, very well written character-sketches.

"The Alchemist" at the Embassy

Many people assume that Ben Jonson is unactable, but this is because they so rarely have a chance of seeing him acted. *The Alchemist* is full of early seventeenth century lore and abuse which is difficult for a modern audience to follow; the characters are caricatures of sixteenth or seventeenth century types; there are only two women in it. And yet the verve of the actors and the intelligence of the producer carried it off triumphantly. The consummate roguery of Mr. Hugh Miller as the pseudo-alchemist bewitched a critical audience; among his "dupes," Mr. Leslie French as the little lawyers' clerk, Mr. Richard Goolden as Drugger, the tobacco-seller, and Mr. Brember Wills as Ananias, the Puritanical deacon, were particularly amusing, but where the cast is so good it is invidious to choose. The performance, in fact, like the old Phœnix productions, proves again that Jonson, merely as a playwright, was a genius. Consider the last act of most modern comedies, and old ones too, for that matter. When Lovewit, the master of the house, returns to find his housekeeper in league with rogues and his house become a resort of credulous fools and whoremasters, what is to happen? Does Lovewit fly into a rage and clap all the rogues in gaol? Do they outwit him in the same way as they outwitted the other gentry? Neither of these obvious solutions is allowed to spoil the finale. Lovewit forgives his servant because he loves wit; he banishes the other rogues, he outwits the fools and he marries the pretty widow who was the bone of contention between them. The last act is a piece of superb comedy and the Embassy Theatre is to be congratulated on its faith in reviving a neglected play, as well as on its production.

The "Beggar's Opera" Again

Fifteen years ago Messrs. Playfair, Frederic Austin and Lovat Fraser planned a delightful surprise for the London theatre-going public, and that public responded with an enthusiasm which proved almost embarrassing. The last revival of the Playfair *Beggar's Opera* was in 1930, when it seemed to me that the piece was becoming a little overfamiliar; yet here it is again blooming anew, with a fresh set of principals, at the Criterion. The encores are not so frequent as yet, nor the applause so rapturous, but the

piece is, thanks to the five-year gap, considerably fresher than when it was last in town. Fresher—but is that quite what is wanted? It is, for instance, a little hard for Mr. Charles Mayhew to have to impersonate Mr. Frederick Ranalow impersonating Macheath, for Miss Margaret Yarde to subdue her rotund extravagance to Miss Elsie French's angular excellence as Mrs. Peachum. Miss Isabel Jeans boldly recreates Lucy Lockit and sings as adorably as she acts, but few members of the new cast have contrived to make their parts sit so snugly upon them. The truth is that a new production is necessary, not the mere resuscitation of the old, admirable in so many ways as it was. In the circumstances one must admit that Mr. Mayhew, compared with Mr. Ranalow, is an indifferent actor, though his singing is superb. And if that is unfair to the reigning Macheath—or to Mr. Ranalow—let the blame be shouldered elsewhere. Mr. Scott Russell remains the best Peachum, though he now plays Lockit, and Miss Joan Collier as Polly sings very sweetly and acts just the least bit too much. For the next revival of the *Beggar's Opera*, can we hope for a complete break with the Hammersmith tradition?

Paula Wessely at the Curzon

What a relief after a plethora of British historical pictures, each more grandiose, more childish and—curiously enough—more undramatic than the last, to see a film in which history may be mishandled but is mishandled with intelligence and spirit! "*. . .So Ended a great Love*" tells of the girlhood of the Grand Duchess Marie Louise, and of her love for the impoverished Duke of Modena, whom she gave up in order to marry Napoleon—the man she had been taught to loathe and fear. Paula Wessely needs no recommendation; and as the pathetic little Grand Duchess she gives an extraordinarily adroit and touching performance. Metternich is a difficult part to play; but Herr Grundgens possesses both a fine presence and a fund of natural dignity, which is relieved now and then by an extremely charming smile. Willi Forst makes the most of Franz of Modena; and perhaps the most delightful episode of the whole film is the scene in which Metternich discovers the Duke of Modena putting the Viennese *corps de ballet* through their paces. A word must be said for the skill with which Franz Herterich has portrayed the Archduchess's father, the Emperor Franz I. But then the film is enjoyable from start to finish. Particularly pleasant are the series of architectural backgrounds—a refreshing contrast to the opium-fantasies of Elstree and Hollywood.

Art Schools and Industry at the County Hall

This exhibition of work by students in art schools controlled by the L.C.C. welcomes the visitor by its generally gay aspect and sends him away delighted with a number of individual works. The textiles are particularly good, so much so that to single any out for special praise seems rather invidious. But N. Rourke (319), S. Waymark (451), R. Kramer (594) are among the names which manufacturers may be recommended to remember. The teaching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, at the Goldsmith's College of Art and the St. Martin's School of Art is obviously excellent. Most of the textiles are designed for hand-printing, but the remarkable originality displayed shows that the designers could adapt themselves to a different medium. The ceramics are less interesting but they are mostly very honourable. There are first-rate posters like D'Arcy Thompson's (402), A. E. C. Hosler's (265) and A. Johnson's (275); some excellent tinned-fruit wrappers from the Central School, and charming model window displays by G. R. Clifton. The lettering from the Sir John Cass Technical Institute maintains a high standard. The furniture is the weakest section—partly no doubt because this is the weakest section in all contemporary design, and partly because it seems to be less intelligently taught. Too many of the exhibitors are occupied with elaborate grainings. A dressing-table (88) from the Shoreditch Technical Institute is a model of everything which furniture ought not to be. But on the whole this exhibition helps to dispel the pessimism produced by the Burlington House Show, for it proves that this country has designers, naturally talented and excellently taught, if only manufacturers can be persuaded to employ them.

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THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, March 15th—
Heifetz, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Performance by Royal College of Art Dramatic Society of "Joseph," preceded by a Ben Jonson Masque, Students' Common Room, Queen's Gate, 8.30. Also on March 16th and 18th.

SATURDAY, March 16th—
Benefit Concert in aid of the Concert Fund, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.
Public Meeting to protest against the Indian Policy of the Government. Speeches by Maurice Browne, J. F. Horrabin, Prof. H. J. Laski, and others, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, 7.

SUNDAY, March 17th—
Prof. F. Aveling on "The Conquest of Pain: Relaxation and Auto-Suggestion," Conway Hall, 11.
Moriz Rosenthal, Palladium, 3.15.
Stanislav Frydberg and Serge Krish, Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, 6.30.

MONDAY, March 18th—
"The Blue Express," Everyman Cinema Theatre, Hampstead.
Film Club. Basil Wright on "Direction," 20 Gloucester Place, 8.30.

TUESDAY, March 19th—
W. McGregor Ross on "More About Kenya Land," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
Prof. H. J. Laski on "The Lessons of the Past Century," London School of Economics, 5.
Frederick Grundy on "The Genetics of Amentia: A Territorial Survey in a Rural Area," Rooms of the Linnean Society, Burlington House, 5.15.
Joseph McCabe on "Wanted, a New Voltaire," Conway Hall, 7.

WEDNESDAY, March 20th—
Native Delegates on "British Administration in Gold Coast Colony," Friends House, Euston Road, 5.30.
A. C. Ritchie and A. C. Sewter on "The Possibilities of a Sociology of Art," Le Play House, 35 Gordon Square, 8.15.
"Cornelius," Duchess Theatre.

THURSDAY, March 21st—
R. Ellis Roberts on "Religion and Poetry," St. Edmunds, Lombard Street, 1.10.
Dr. Susan Isaacs on "Habits, Discipline and Parental Authority," Caxton Hall, 8.
London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

FRIDAY, March 22nd—
J. G. Crowther on "Science in Soviet Russia," London School of Economics, 8.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE poet who chafes at neglect must have moments when he prefers even silence to the imagined horrors of a poetry-infested world. Suppose we were all millionaires in the poetic coin, all simply rolling in verses—by no means an impossibility! It is not difficult to conceive of a state of society for which poetry, like music, had become a broadcast commodity; in this Eldorado a gibbering of verses would go on all day long, behind bars, in drawing-rooms, at street corners—to say nothing of Sunday half-hours with *Beowulf*, and café recitals of Hemans and Robert W. Service. One can imagine the B.B.C. programme given, say, by Dame Sybil Thorndike and Mr. John Drinkwater:

Introduction to "Paradise Lost"	*Milton*
The Mad Scene from "Hamlet"	*Shakespeare*
"Love is like a Dizziness"	*James Hogg*
Excerpt from "Ashtaroth"	*Adam Gordon Lindsay*
"Blow Out, You Bugles"	*Rupert Brooke*
Selection from "Queen Mab"	*Shelley*
"Apples" (recited by the composer)	*John Drinkwater*

Or perhaps, since the air is full already, our eyes would be distracted by hoardings displaying the pages of *The Golden Treasury*, newspapers would print strips of Mr. Eliot (Prufrock on the sands), a canto of *The City of Dreadful Night* would be pasted up in all well-lit thoroughfares, and we should have to listen to barbers misquoting Keats. It would be a country fit—as some politician would rise to point out—for poetry-lovers to live in; and the wretched poet, as he fled for Greenland or the Sahara, would exclaim, "Save me, save me, O God, from this hell of appreciation!"

* * *

At least we may be thankful that literature exists in *silence*. Even the millionth reader of a book comes to it with a certain privacy; he can choose his own time for reading; he can leave the pages uncut, if he wants to. We do not read *L'Éducation Sentimentale* at seventeen, or *Little Dorrit* at twenty-eight. And how tired we should get of Byron, for example, if we were forced by a benevolent wireless or publicity department to be listening to him at all hours of the day! The saturation-point of *Manfred* or *Childe Harold* would be reached pretty soon, I imagine; and *Don Juan* would not hold out for ever. Some writers—Byron, I think, is one—even improve by neglect; and so long as we do not read too much of them they mature in the memory. James Thomson, too, will steadily rise in the estimation of anyone who does not put *The City of Dreadful Night* too often to the test. One of the arts of reading is to neglect the right author at the right moment.

* * *

It is the fault of nine out of ten anthologies that, in a minor way, they assault our privacy either by reiterating stock-pieces like a klaxon or by huddling together a number of passages so that they lose meaning. I suppose it was a general distrust of anthologies that made me miss Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Texts and Pretexts* (Chatto and Windus), when it appeared three years ago; the publishers have added it now to their three-and-sixpenny Phoenix Library. What an admirable book it is! The method is original—half commentary, half quotation—and the choice of passages excellent. How many of these names are new to you—Thomas Bastard, Edward Benlowes, Alexander Brome, Jean Ogier de Gombauld, Bartholomew Griffin, Henry Noel, R. Wever? You may be surprised to find that they wrote so well. One of the merits of this anthology is that it continually surprises and delights at the same time. A number of fairly well-known pieces are given fresh contexts; sometimes it is to an unfamiliar side of a poet that our attention is drawn:

> In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
> The floor of plaster and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
> With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies—alas, how changed from him,
> That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim! . . .

These lines, with their admirable particularity, come from Pope's *Epistle to Lord Bathurst*, and even if we recognise them, they strike us here with a sense of novelty. Among the lesser poets, and the completely unknown, Mr. Huxley must have picked over a good deal of rubbish for some of his finds. I enjoyed, as much as anything in the volume, his discovery (it almost amounts to that) of George Darley, poet and mathematician (1795–1846), from whom he quotes three pieces. "Siren Chorus" is new to me:

> Troop home to silent grots and caves,
> Troop home and mimic as you go
> The mournful winding of the waves,
> Which to their dark abysses flow.
>
> At this sweet hour all things beside
> In amorous pairs to covert creep;
> The swans that brush the evening tide
> Homewards in snowy couples keep.
>
> In his green den the murmuring seal
> Close by his sleek companion lies,
> While singly we to bedward steal,
> And close in fruitless sleep our eyes.
>
> In bowers of love men take their rest,
> In loveless bowers we sigh alone;
> With bosom-friends are others blest,
> But we have none—but we have none.

That is delightful; as Mr. Huxley points out, the seals are absurd, but they make the poem. Unlike most other anthologies, this one can be read straight through from beginning to end, because each of the fifty sections is a little essay, good in itself and forming part of a whole. The commentary is as much a criticism of life as of poetry, and Mr. Huxley sets modern experience side by side with the experience of the past, contrasting them, linking them together. His reflections are both witty and serious; though occasionally, as when he says that we may have a religion so long as we don't believe in it, he comes near to self-parody. His aim, he tells us, has been to construct a new Divine Comedy; or rather, since that is a task for a poet, to provide the substitute for one.

* * *

A new Divine Comedy—how often it is invoked and how far off it seems! Mr. Eliot, perhaps, has got nearest to it, though only in a phrase or two at a time. And there is Mr. Pound, determined to go the whole hog. Another batch of his Cantos, *Nos. XXXI–XLI* (Faber and Faber, 6*s*.), is published this week. I have found them almost unreadable. There are, of course, occasional fine passages of translation; he does at times, as Mr. Wyndham Lewis has said, amaze us by reclaiming whole slices of the past. But nine-tenths of this new volume—when it gets stuck in finance and armament deals—seems to me as dull as a washing-book. I am not a believer, in any case, in the super-Pound. He is the master, if ever there was one, of the exquisite small effect (in *Ripostes* and *Cathay*, for example), and the result of plunging into epic, where according to Eliot "he is wholly himself," has been to let loose the abracadabra which he had hitherto kept for his prose. To those who find perverse amusement in pretentious bosh, I can strongly recommend *How to Read* and *The A.B.C. of Reading*. The second is rather thickly obscured by jargon and mystical legerdemain. *How to Read* is a straight talk to you and me. Mr. Pound produces there his "minimum basis of culture," which he has elaborated since: Confucius, Homer, Ovid, a Provençal song book, Dante, Villon, Voltaire, Stendhal, Flaubert, Gautier, Corbière, Rimbaud—a book or two of each, usually in translation, enabling the investor in taste to get a quick return. It is the sort of plan, one imagines, which Bouvard and Pécuchet might have devised during the winter evenings on the farm.

G. W. STONIER

THREE TRAVELLERS

Libyan Sands. By RALPH A. BAGNOLD. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 15*s.*

A Plant Hunter in Tibet. By F. KINGDON WARD. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Swinging the Equator. By W. J. MAKIN. *Jarrolds.* 18*s.*

One of the few charms of civilised man is his disinterestedness. Among primitive peoples, every act—even the most far-fetched and abstruse social ceremony—is performed with a perfectly practical end in view; and it is not until we reach a very advanced stage of culture that we find human beings engaged in doing things merely for the sake of doing them, or to satisfy a dispassionate curiosity. How strange, and yet how pleasing, is the spirit of adventure revealed by the travel-books of Major Bagnold and Mr. F. Kingdon Ward! A botanist enters Tibet to collect the seeds of exotic plants. A group of young English soldiers, back from the North-West Frontier on leave, go churning off into the sands of the Libyan desert—their object not a military reconnaissance, not sport, not archaeology, but the sheer fascination of that empty quarter and the excitement of crossing unknown ground. Nor was their expedition unrepeated. And *Libyan Sands* contains the narrative of a number of such journeys, all undertaken by car, in territory that makes travel by car a difficult and, at times, an extremely arduous business.

Could cars penetrate the Great Sand Sea, previously reconnoitred with camels by the German traveller, Rohlfs? Far away in Waziristan, Major Bagnold meditated this absorbing problem; and, in 1929, an air service having in the meanwhile been established between Egypt and India, he flew to Cairo, determined to spend a month organising an attempt on the mighty sand barrier that had defeated Rohlfs' expedition in 1874. For though he had made his way into the dune country, Rohlfs was obliged to turn aside and run for the celebrated oasis of Siwa, where Alexander the Great once received the title of God. The thickness of the barrier was still unknown; and even more problematic was the behaviour of motor vehicles when brought face to face with huge natural ramparts of which it was impossible to gauge either the consistency or the precise extent. One envies the travellers the first glimpse of their goal:

> . . . The scenery changed again. We emerged once more on to open unbroken ground of hard grey rock spotted with pools of good firm sand. Ahead, not far away, along the whole of the western horizon, lit up by an early morning sun, lay the golden wall of the dunes. Through field glasses their regular summit could be seen. There was nothing else. The earth was dead flat, and on nearer approach to the dunes they seemed in contrast to rise up in front as mountain ranges. By noon the outermost rampart of sand was reached, a straight line of summits running across our path. Regularly spaced crests towered up as if a giant wave were about to break.

There was a preliminary examination; then, "feeling like a small boy on a horse about to take his first big fence," Major Bagnold accelerated to forty miles an hour:

> I saw Burridge holding on to the side of the lorry grimly. Suddenly the light doubled in strength as if more suns had been switched on. A huge glaring wall of yellow shot up high into the sky in front of us. The lorry tipped violently backwards—and we rose as in a lift, smoothly, without vibration. We floated up and up on a yellow cloud. All the accustomed car movements had ceased; only the speedometer told us that we were still moving fast. It was incredible. Instead of sticking deep in loose sand at the bottom as instinct and experience both foretold, we were now near the top a hundred feet above the ground. Then the skyline receded, disclosing a smooth blank surface . . . nearly level. The glare was intense; one could distinguish nothing, but from the slow rolling movements of the lorry we must be going over a series of gentle undulations.

On dismounting, the travellers found that the sand was quite soft and that they owed their easy ascent to "the special way the grains were packed" . . . From these quotations, it will be evident that Major Bagnold's prose style has the supreme virtues of simplicity, clarity and vividness. Though not a literary traveller in the grand tradition of Doughty and Lawrence, he writes well, because he is writing of experiences that he enjoyed, and because he is blessed with a sharp and sensitive eye. In the compass of a short review, one cannot hope to detail the various adventurous expeditions in which he took part between 1927 and 1932; and it must be enough to add that *Libyan Sands* is a delightful book. All his journeys required meticulous organisation; but time and trouble reaped a magnificent reward.

Major Bagnold's efforts were entirely disinterested. The Libyan desert is empty, both of human remains and—except for its very rare oases—of plant and animal life. In the last resort, it was the charm of that enormous sunbaked vacancy, of its utter silence and of the beauty of perpetually changing sand dunes, that drew him on through so many monotonous and exhausting hours. Mr. Kingdon Ward, however, though he too, one suspects, travelled very largely in search of the beauty and strangeness that are to be found in an almost virgin landscape, made his way into Tibet with a practical aim. He is a hunter of rare plants. . . . Mr. Kingdon Ward writes less vividly than Major Bagnold; but *A Plant Hunter in Tibet* is well worth reading and contains nineteen remarkably good photographs. His frontispiece—a beflagged grave on a Tibetan mountainside—has the poetic melancholy of an early Chinese painting.

In disagreeable contrast to the simple, vivid, unpretentious narratives of Major Bagnold and Mr. Kingdon Ward—Major Bagnold ploughing an arduous track up the shimmering lion-coloured flank of a gigantic Libyan sand dune; Mr. Kingdon Ward gathering the seeds of some rare gentian many thousand feet above the nearest inhabited settlement—come the diffuse and journalistic impressions of Mr. W. J. Makin. "It is fashionable nowadays," begins Mr. Makin, "to put down your cocktail at a whoopee party, pick up a typewriter, and run away to Siberia or the Sahara. . . . These runaways from civilisation who find only syphilisation have my sympathy. . . ." Personally, he sets out "because I find the lure of Africa always like a stealthy fever in my blood." *Swinging the Equator* is a brisk, if somewhat commonplace, account of a flight across Africa in one of the latest monoplanes of the Imperial Airways Fleet; the illustrations are numerous, but poor. Incidentally, his spelling of "*Mistinguette*" suggests that African fever is no help in the matter of proof-correction.

PETER QUENNELL

MARXISM TRENCHANTLY RE-STATED

The Nature of Capitalist Crisis. By JOHN STRACHEY *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Strachey is a Marxist; and this alone will be enough to cause many economists and many who do not pretend to be economists to take no notice of his arguments. For Marxism, they are assured, has been exploded long ago, if not as a theory of history, at all events as an economic doctrine based upon the labour theory of value. It is true that Marxism, despite all the exposures of the professional economists, lives obstinately on in the minds of men. But that may be regarded as yet another example, among the many which the contemporary situation affords, of human irrationality and imperviousness to the force of logical argument.

Mr. Strachey at least is among those whom the refuters of Karl Marx have not been able to convince. He gives us here what is in essence a restatement of an important part of the argument of *Das Kapital*, with nothing added and with nothing subtracted. As a foundation, he accepts entirely the Marxian theory of value. Value, he holds, as distinct from price, depends entirely on the amount of human labour incorporated in a commodity. Commodities may be sold in fact at more or less than their "value" in this sense; and they must be so sold in order that profits may be equalised between different lines of business. But value, though it has nothing to do with the relative pricing of particular commodities, is precisely what Marx said it was—the congelation in a commodity of a certain quantity of human labour, of socially necessary labour, of quantitatively different labours reduced to a common quantitative standard.

There is no difficulty in beating off the familiar attacks upon this theory; for they are all based on the assumption that Marx was seeking in some way to identify "values" with prices, whereas Mr. Strachey is easily able to show that he was not, save in the sense that in any situation the totality of "values" must equal the totality of prices, since they both represent the same thing—the totality of goods offered for sale. The question then is whether Marx's definition of "value"—impregnable in logic, since anyone is entitled to make a word mean what he chooses, provided he sticks consistently to his definition throughout the argument—is useful and productive of enlightenment, and not merely beside the point.

Mr. Strachey, confining his attention to Marx's theory of capitalist crisis, proceeds, on the basis of the Marxian theory of

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An Atlas of European History *by* J. F. HORRABIN. 3/6 [*May*]

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[*continued in next column*

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The most important examination of the case for and against Private Manufacture that has yet been attempted. The author's conclusion is that the abolition of this system is essential.

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This will be a lucid exposition by one of the few men in England qualified to undertake the task: we suspect (but we do not know) that his conclusion will be an acceptance of the doctrine, with reservations.

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Continued from

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[*continued in next column*

FASCISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Mussolini's Italy *by* DR. HERMAN FINER, *Reader in Public Administration, University of London.* 10/6 [*May*]

It is not too much to claim that this is the first exhaustive and authoritative statement of what Italian Fascism really is, what it has done and what it is likely to do. The author spent an entire year in Italy gathering material, and interviewed officials of every rank from Mussolini downwards. Here are some of the chief sections of the book: A Brief Summary of Dictatorship; The Birth of Fascism; The Fascist View of Man's Nature and Destiny; Constitutional Organs; The Manufacture of Obedience; The Spiritual Costs of Fascism.

I Was Hitler's Prisoner *by* STEFAN LORANT, *formerly editor of the Münchner Illustrierte Presse.* 10/6 [*April*]

This is the best account we have read of a concentration camp, all the more deadly for the author's humour and moderation.

"*His magnificent endeavour to be just raises the book to the level of a major historical document*"—Bruno Frank

Intelligent Man's Guide to Jew-Baiting *by* GEORGE SACKS. 5/- [*Just out*]

We have read only two books that talk sense about the "Jewish problem"—this, and a famous one.

The War Against the West: *A Cross-Section of the Nazi Mind by* AUREL KOLNAI. 10/6 [*Summer*]

Dr. Kolnai's knowledge of the literature of Nazi-ism is probably greater than that of any living man, and he shows that there exists a real body of Nazi philosophy, fraught with perils for the Western world that can only be called Satanic. Dr. Kolnai writes at once with profound understanding and with a sparkling irony, and his book cannot be neglected by anyone who wishes to understand whither events are leading.

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Preceding Page

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EMPIRE

The Duty of Empire *by* LEONARD BARNES, *author of 'Caliban in Africa.'* 10/6 [*Spring*]

Mr. Barnes, after examining the necessity for a radical revision of Britain's attitude towards her Empire under the heads of Ethics, Politics, and Economics, ends by outlining a rational Socialist Colonial policy.

Scottish Journey *by* EDWIN MUIR. 8/6 [*Spring*]

Mr. Muir does for Scotland what Priestley did for England. What he saw will be a revelation to many.

Public Ill-Health *by* A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE AGAINST MALNUTRITION 5/- [*Spring*]

The author disproves the conclusions of the official annual Report on Public Health which stated that unemployment has had no ill-effects on the national health. By means of a series of very damaging extracts, all taken from official sources, he establishes beyond any doubt the relation between poverty and malnutrition.

I Lived in a Slum *by* MRS. CECIL CHESTERTON. 7/6 [*Spring*]

The author of "In Darkest London" has not been content with hearsay evidence, statistics or experimental visits. She has shared the dirt, the squalor, and the overcrowding that are the daily lot of thousands.

Parliamentary Reform *by* W. IVOR JENNINGS, *Reader in English Law in the University of London.* 3/6 [*Just out*]

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The purpose of Mrs. Manning's visit was to investigate personally the repression being exercised by the Spanish Government as a result of the revolt of October 1934. She visited numerous political prisoners still in jail, and talked with workers in hiding and on the run, and with Trade Union officials, journalists and students.

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The Economic Consequences of the New Deal *by* B. STOLBERG *and* W. J. VINTON. 2/6 [*March 25th*]

The authors are a labour expert and a distinguished member of the Economic Staff at Columbia University; and their book has received more attention in the U.S. than any other book on the New Deal.

"It is so plainly, and yet so wittily, written that it is almost impossible to put it down before one has turned the last page; and yet one could not call it superficial. Although there is a wisecrack, and usually a first-rate one, on almost every page, the book as a whole does achieve a devastating criticism of the New Deal"—John Strachey

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PERSONALITIES

The Intelligentsia of Great Britain *by* DMITRI MIRSKY, *formerly Prince Mirsky, of King's College, London.* 6/- [*Ready on Monday*]

This extremely trenchant examination of our intellectual life contains highly provocative estimates of Shaw, Wells, Keynes, Russell, Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Wyndham Lewis, Middleton Murry, Eddington, Jeans, T. S. Eliot, Laski, Lytton Strachey, Dean Inge, etc., etc.

[*continued in next column*

Thorsten Veblen and His America *by* JOSEPH DORFMAN. 18/- [*April*]

"I think that Veblen is by all odds the greatest economic sociologist America has produced. Further, I think that the Life by Dorfman is the most interesting picture of an academic figure that I have read for many a year. I cannot imagine anybody reading it without a sense that it is a vital contribution not only to the intellectual history of the United States but to the understanding of the social thought of our time"—Harold J. Laski.

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Contraceptive Methods *A Handbook for General Practitioners by* JOAN MALLESON, M.B., B.S. 3/6 [*Spring*]

This book is short, lucid and interesting; it gives a full summary of the contraceptive methods which are in regular use by the public, with comments upon their suitability and relative degrees of safety. In addition, it describes carefully those methods which are medically recommended, and in use at the Birth Control Clinics. The practitioner who has read this small book will never be placed in the disadvantageous position of knowing less about contraceptive methods than does his patient.

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value, to restate Marx's demonstration of the inevitable tendency of Capitalism to engender crisis out of boom. Marx, in Volume III of *Das Kapital* (which is, incidentally, the most important part of the book), bases this demonstration on his view that, as capitalist accumulation proceeds, the rate of profit is bound to fall. Mr. Strachey seems to think that this contention of Marx rests necessarily on the labour theory of value. But this is not so. It is really independent of Marx's value theory. The essence of it is that, as technical invention advances, the processes of production become more capitalistic, so that the proportion of total capital to wages grows larger. This means that, in a typical process of production, more fixed capital is used up in relation to the labour employed, so that the cost for depreciation of fixed capital becomes a larger proportion of total cost. This must diminish the proportion of the gross output available for sharing between capital and labour: so that, if their proportionate shares remain unchanged, both must fall, as percentages of the total. The profit of capital being reckoned on the total sum invested, this involves a fall in the *rate* of profit, even if the absolute *amount* of profit continues to increase.

On the basis of this analysis, Marx represents the process of capitalistic production as a struggle to maintain the *amount* of surplus value, or profit, in face of an ineluctible tendency for the *rate* of profit to fall as capital accumulates. He holds that this is achieved partly by increasing the rate of exploitation of labour—a process made possible by the growing productivity of industry, which reduces the labour time necessary to supply enough goods for the labourer's subsistence, and thus leaves a growing surplus for the capitalist to appropriate. But he considers that there are limits to the possibility of maintaining the rate of profit in this way, and that consequently the capitalist system falls into recurrent crises whenever the rate of profit is so reduced as to cause the capitalists to disemploy labour, on account of their inability to market at a remunerative price the growing mass of commodities which they are in a position to produce.

When such a crisis occurs, Marx argues that the situation is retrieved for Capitalism partly by cutting down the price of labour, so as to widen the margin between costs and prices, and partly by writing off, or writing down, capital assets so as to reduce the mass of capital on which the rate of profit has to be reckoned. The less efficient firms vanish, and even the more efficient have to write down their capital till profitability is restored. Then the process starts again, until the falling rate of profit again asserts itself, to provide a new crisis.

Mr. Strachey faithfully repeats this Marxian theory, arguing that, for lack of it, all non-Marxian economists miss the point, so that they fall into two rival schools, of which each sees only one-half of the truth. The more "orthodox" argue that, as the essential thing is to restore profitability, and so make it worth while for the capitalists to employ more labour, wages must be cut down in order to reduce costs and so get the rate of profit back again to a remunerative level. The less orthodox contend that, as the crisis arises from a glut of goods which cannot be sold at remunerative prices, the remedy is so to increase purchasing power as to restore profitability.

To these two schools Mr. Strachey makes reply that, if the more orthodox get their way and wages are reduced, the effect will be to contract the market and make the recovery of full employment and production impossible, whereas, if the under-consumptionists prevail, the consequence will be an inflationary boom leading on to a subsequent crisis. In support of this view he effectively quotes each school against the other, and concludes that each establishes its point in a negative sense, but neither propounds any positive remedy for the crisis. The only remedy, Mr. Strachey contends, is totally to change the economic system, so that employment and production will no longer depend on profitability, but on social need.

There is much more than this in Mr. Strachey's book—a highly effective criticism of Major Douglas and a much less effective attack on Mr. J. A. Hobson, whom he certainly misunderstands, an onslaught on all those who believe in the possibility of establishing the new economic system without violent revolution, by parliamentary means, a diagnosis *à la Lenin* of Capitalism in its imperialist phase, and a denial that Fascism is anything other than a futile effort by Capitalism to rescue itself by dictatorship from its fatal dilemma. If there were space, it would be well worth while to follow Mr. Strachey into these highly controversial fields; but it has seemed best to reproduce the central points of his argument at some length—the more because Volume III of *Das Kapital* is little read, except by devout Marxists, and its thesis is the quintessence of Marxism as applied to the economic problems of to-day. Mr. Strachey has read his Marx; and he presents Marx's argument with real force and admirable lucidity of style—though, in common with other Marxists, he persists in regarding Marx's theory of crises as depending on the labour theory of value—which it does not. As for Mr. Strachey's criticisms of my own writings, which are numerous, I will say at this stage only that he has given me to think, as I believe he will anyone who is at the trouble of following his closely reasoned argument. I do not mean that he has convinced me that his Communist conclusion is right. He has not; but he has made me re-think my own position and go back to Marx with a clearer insight than before into certain essential parts of the Marxian theory. There is certainly no better study than this in English of the living part of Marx's economic doctrines; and I hope Mr. Strachey's book will be read by everyone who is groping after truth in a bewilderingly disorganised world. The whole truth his readers will not find; but help towards its discovery I think they will find here in satisfying measure.

G. D. H. COLE

L'AMI DU PEUPLE

Marat. By PIERS COMPTON. *Muller.* 5s.

In English several, and in French innumerable, lives of Marat have been published, and Mr. Compton does not claim to present any striking new material or to fill up the gaps in our knowledge of Marat's early wanderings. His book is notable for a florid metaphoric style which tends to obscure rather than to clarify the author's meaning, but it is readable: Mr. Compton abstains from wild conjecture, he wastes no time in making moral judgments which the reader can make for himself, and, as skilfully as a good detective novelist, he keeps his story moving.

Jean-Paul Marat was born at Boudry, on the Lac de Neuchâtel, in 1743: his father was a Sardinian, probably a tradesman, of unknown antecedents; his mother, daughter of a Huguenot hairdresser. From the age of seventeen Marat travelled widely, first as a student, then as a practitioner of medicine, and sometimes as a tutor and a teacher of languages. At one time he practised in Harley Street, at another in Newcastle: he spent a year in Dublin, he studied at Toulouse and Bordeaux, and he took a doctorate at St. Andrews. At last, in 1777, he was appointed physician to the guards of the Comte d'Artois, a position held until 1786. Meanwhile he published (in English) *An Essay on the Human Soul* (in support of dualism), a *Philosophical Essay on Man* and *The Chains of Slavery* ("A Work wherein the Clandestine and Villainous attempts of Princes to Ruin Liberty are Pointed out, and the Dreadful Scenes of Despotism Disclosed. . . .") These works showed conscientious, though somewhat hurried, erudition, rather than originality. Marat at this time and in the early stages of the Revolution was a constitutional monarchist, relying upon the King to curb the arbitrary power of the aristocracy. For some years he abandoned politics and turned to science, and it is unfortunate that Mr. Compton did not sacrifice a little of his sprightliness in order to give his readers a clear account of Marat's scientific "discoveries," for in one way they are related to his subsequent success as a popular journalist. Marat was by no means a quack: his translation of Newton's *Opticks*, for example, was a useful piece of work; but his habit of analysing phenomena in terms of his own pet concepts, and his inability to think of the facts in any other terms, estranged him from the scientists of his time. A candle, he argued (*Recherches physiques sur le feu*, 1780), goes out in an enclosed space because the air, diluted by the flame and unable to escape, compresses the flame and smothers it. This statement is easy to grasp, and it describes the facts, but it suggests nothing further. It lacks the difficulty, but at the same time it lacks the scope, and the power of suggesting new experiments, of Lavoisier's oxidation theory. It was Marat's weakness as a scientist, and later his strength as a journalist, that he could not see things except in terms of his own preconceived theories. When the Revolution came, Marat could see only one thing: that the sufferings of France had been caused by the selfishness and greed of the nobles, and that at all costs the nobles and all those who sympathised with them must be removed finally and absolutely from power. It was a simple analysis, too simple, but to Marat it was a solace for the neglect he had suffered from the upper classes and from the Academy. Mr. Compton, anxious not to stress the case against Marat, does not mention the part which he played in the denunciation of Lavoisier. The omission is serious, for the attacks on Lavoisier which Marat launched in the pa-

L'Ami du Peuple show very clearly the bitterness of disappointed ambition behind the consistent political extremist.

When, in 1789, working in cellars and basements, Marat began to publish a paper calling for extreme action, it still seemed to many that a policy of moderation was possible. Marat formed a party of one: even the men of the extreme left doubted the value of his bitterness and violence. He was hunted from one hiding place to another, but his paper found readers, and he continued to denounce the machinations of the aristocrats and the ineptitude of the Girondins. "None could deplore the shedding of blood more than myself, but to prevent its being made to flow in streams I urge you to sacrifice a few drops." The masses, hungry, frightened and exasperated, could understand his argument. Dumouriez, in spite of his popularity and his success in preserving France from the threatened invasion, was denounced as a potential traitor. He was defeated at Neerwinden and went over to the Austrians. Marat was justified, but he was now attacked by the Girondins for inciting the people to bread-riots: the Montagnards came to his defence, and for a moment he was among their leaders in the struggle which brought them to power. In a crisis, simplicity, even over-simplicity, is stronger than wisdom and sophistication. When the majority of a people is uneducated, a free press is dangerous, not for the silliness of its opinions, but because it accustoms its readers to a low level of argument. Marat had helped the Montagnards to power: a few weeks later he was murdered—it is doubtful whether even his allies would have found him useful much longer.

In Mr. Compton's study we have a memorable and not unsympathetic picture of the man whose name, a few months after his death, became for the French people a reminder of all that was worst and weakest in themselves, and in reading the grim record we are almost grateful for the light relief of Mr. Compton's purple passages: "How did they rest, these haloed and armoured founders under the dark threat of storm that daily grew more audible in the streets? The reliquary and gilded tomb held all, while on the earth men simmered and drank deep of change." It is a vicious style, but it is less menacing to peace and reason than the still more meretricious rhetoric and the falsely simplified logic of Marat and our daily Press. MICHAEL ROBERTS

LAW AND POLITICS

The Twilight of the Supreme Court. By EDWARD S. CORWIN. *Oxford University Press.* 11s. 6d.

It is not too much to say that no book in many years has cast so clear a light as this upon the place of the Supreme Court in American life. Professor Corwin has great virtues. Not only has he a full acquaintance with the relevant literature; he brings to its study a sense of the philosophies involved, a judgment upon the drift of tendencies, a clear insight into judicial motivation—all of which are rare in the Anglo-American student of law. The reader who analysed this book in the light of Frankfurter and Greene's remarkable study of the business of the Supreme Court would have an understanding not otherwise available of the most unique institution in American political life.

For unless the Supreme Court be viewed, as Professor Corwin views it, essentially as a special kind of legislative body, its place in the American Constitution cannot be fully explained. It has defined, ever since the days of Marshall, the background within which State legislatures and the Congress must work. It has done this, broadly speaking, within the ambit of three principles. In the first place there has been the insistence that the nation needs all the authority necessary to preserve its supremacy: territorial particularism is of secondary and, despite State-sovereignty, not of primary importance. In the second place, under the guise of natural law, the Court has sought to protect those vested rights which, in a capitalist civilisation, appear to its lawyers as synonymous with natural law. In the third place, it has sought to adapt its general concepts to a changing economic scene. The pressure of new circumstances has, so far, always driven the Supreme Court to the view that, somehow, and in the long run, the claims of a new "mental climate" must find their place within the categories of American constitutional law.

With urbanity and wit and great literary charm Professor Corwin explains how this has been done. From his picture I think two essential conclusions emerge. The first is that the Court has always interpreted principles, so far as it could, to fit the needs of the dominant economic interest of any given time; the second is that it has always taken care never so far to lag behind a pressing public opinion as to create a sense of outrage. It has retained the respect of the American electorate, because while it has been a conservative force, it has never been unyieldingly conservative. If there has been Mr. Justice Brewer there has been Mr. Justice Holmes; if there has been Mr. Justice McReynolds there has been Mr. Justice Brandeis. The Supreme Court judge—it is an inherent quality of his function—must be statesman as well as judge. Not the least significant of his tasks is his willingness to adapt the criteria of his work to pressures which are likely to be irresistible.

Nothing is more fascinating in Professor Corwin's luminous pages than his study of the habits of the Courts in the context of the Roosevelt experiment. He does not conceal his own general sympathy with its purposes. But he also makes it evident that those who, like Mr. J. W. Davis, or Mr. Newton Baker, rely on the Court to protect the property-interests of a system which has committed suicide are depending upon a broken reed. The Court can hamper the will of the people; but, in the long run, its authority means delay and not control. Wherever that delay has been interposed in a field where popular judgment is definite and not hesitant, judicial opposition has hindered and not helped the prestige of the Court. It is a legitimate inference from Professor Corwin's pages that he believes the Court will do well now to find the formulae which makes it possible for it to help, and not to hinder, the Roosevelt policies. It is, as Dean Clark says in his wise preface, a call to lawyers not to risk the reputation of the Court by pushing it towards attempts at control and direction of social institutions which are certain of ultimate failure. English students who remember the harm done to the standing of their own courts by decisions like those in the Taff Vale and the Osborne cases will understand this approach. Courts which seem the servants of vested interests on trial do more to provoke a revolutionary temper than any other social instrument. For they then display, as no legislature can display, the inescapable bias inherent in the nature of the State. No wiser commentary on this issue can be found than the learned pages in which Professor Corwin has illustrated this theme. HAROLD J. LASKI

HONOURABLE MOUNTAINS

The Romance of Mountaineering. By R. L. G. IRVING. *Dent.* 18s.

Mr. Irving's finely illustrated and fascinating book has a much greater interest than its title might suggest. It is much more than yet another book of stiff climbs with a dash of philosophy; it is a history, and a critical history, of the sport or discipline. And it is by the standards proper to history that it should be judged.

Mr. Irving gets seriously to work with a delightful account of the Lord of Domp Julien's ascent of the Mont Aiguille in Dauphiné in 1492 (a significant date!). "Half a league of ladders" and divers "subtilz engins" were needed to reach the pastured summit of the cliffs, to which, it is diverting to note, some tame rabbits were introduced by a clerical member of the party. The spirit of this agreeable conclusion is notably different from that of Scheuchzer's 1723 treatise on mountain phenomena, with its list of nearly classified dragons.

The author's advocacy of "pure" mountaineering, without admixture of personal, competitive or even scientific motives gradually gathers momentum during his excellent chapters on the winning of Mont Blanc and the conquest of the Great Peaks. It is a plea which he sustains throughout the book, with a deep sincerity which one hopes will do something to arrest the recent morbid developments in the sport which he discusses in Part II.

It was inevitable that when the principal European ranges had been included in the playground the level of technique should be forced upwards. Nevertheless, between the more or less legitimate conquest of, say, all the ridges of a peak, including such as the Furggen and the gymnastic tactics of the Munich school of cragsmen or the Matterhorn face climbers, there is a gulf of difference. A danger cult has arisen, aided, one sees, by a nationalism which Mr. Irving rather indecisively condemns.

The narrative of the Italian ascent of the East Face of the Matterhorn in 1929 in despite of every hazard of rotten and more than vertical rock and bombardment of ice and stone, forced on until darkness fell and the party were compelled to sleep on their ropes, is morbidly exciting enough. It is only one degree less so than that of the Schmids' conquest of the North Face. One feels, indeed, that the Schmids would have welcomed the pleasant complication of a resurrection of dragons.

The chapter on Mechanisation discloses that the author, too, has felt the thrill of these illegitimate extensions of the discipline, but his comment on the Wilde Kaiser cragsmen makes me think that he underestimates the importance of one originating cause of this type of virtuosity. The mere proximity of just one opportunity for serious climbing in any neighbourhood inevitably causes qualitatively improper risks to be taken. The reviewer's own exploration of the Cheddar Gorge was prompted thus. Recent performances in the Pyrenees by such as Dr. Arlaud, like that of the ascent of the Mur de la Cascade at Gavarnie, have a similar origin. And on the larger scale certainly not all of Mr. Irving's routes on Mont Blanc would have been approved by an old-fashioned purist.

In all this the author displays sound judgment and the great knowledge one expects of him. The case is otherwise with his rather unnecessary chapter on Nationality in Mountaineering. And while the humour of a Mummery is all too rare in mountaineering literature, there is a too frequent intrusion of such graceless remarks as Mr. Irving's comment on a victorious celebration of the Duke of the Abruzzi: "Fancy with your last gasp having to cheer for the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and Comrade Popopovski! But then a Communist wouldn't waste his breath on climbing"—or his time in reading about it, one supposes.

Finally, if one discerns nothing very convincing in his Solvitur in Excelsis that may be because no better summary of mountaineering philosophy could be required than the Japanese climbers' motto which Mr. Irving himself gives: "May our five senses be pure and may the weather on the honourable mountain be fine." And for purity of both sense and motive *The Romance of Mountaineering* is an ardent and continually engrossing plea.

RALPH BATES

FRENCH INFLUENCE IN ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold and France: The Poet. By IRIS ESTHER SELLS. *Cambridge University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

"'Thou master of my wandering youth'—in these serious, and by no means rhetorical, words Arnold apostrophised the author of *Obermann*," says Mrs. Sells, whose book draws attention to the curious fact that a great many features of Arnold's poetic philosophy had their source in the same field as that from which the French Decadent movement grew. We were aware, of course, that Arnold was a victim of *mal de siècle;* but it needed this volume of research to show us how nearly related to the original French version of the disease was the cast of thought from which the headmaster of Rugby's son unexpectedly suffered.

The apostrophised master of Arnold's wandering youth was Etienne Pivert de Senancour, about whom George Sand raved so enthusiastically, finding in his philosophical romance *Obermann* a soul-mate of her own frenetic *Lélia*. Senancour's hero was similarly related to Chateaubriand's *René*. This trio of gloomy, distraught and passionate souls can only appear ludicrous to us now, and their outbursts and meditations are of scant contemporary interest. Sainte-Beuve, an ardent admirer of Lélia, described her thus: "Le front reste uni et pur, les cheveux sont noirs et abondants comme toujours; la taille élégante et haute n'a pas fléchi. Le regard se promène avec dédain ou sérénité sur le monde, l'intelligence des choses n'a jamais été si limpide; mais où est le vie, où est l'amour?" This description can be applied more or less accurately to a great many figures of the early days of Romanticism. Lélia is a more harmless version of the Fatal Woman, counterpart of the Byronic Hero, described in much detail by Professor Mario Praz in *The Romantic Agony*. The development of this type can without much difficulty be traced throughout the nineteenth century to its logical culmination in the idiotic and horrible figure of Des Esseintes and the androgynes of the *fin-de-siècle*. A minor offshoot of this development were the meditative peasants of George Sand's later novels, *Jeanne, François le Champi* and others, products of a sentimental reaction against intellectualism and the "thirst for the infinite"; and were not these, surely, the prototypes of Arnold's Scholar-Gypsy?

In 1846, when Arnold was twenty-three, he paid a visit to George Sand's château at Nohant. (Later she described him to Renan as a "young travelling Milton.") While he was there George Sand introduced him to the work of Senancour, and was apparently very successful in infecting him with her own en-

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thusiasm. In 1848 and 1849 Arnold was making sentimental pilgrimages to the Alps in whose eternal silences Obermann had found solace for his sick soul.

It is easy to understand how much the romantic conceptions of striving and doubt and stoical resignation that were fostered by George Sand and her circle would appeal to a young and conscientious Liberal such as Arnold was. Mrs. Sells produces evidence to show the influence of *Obermann*, in a way the quintessence of the thought of that period, variously affecting Arnold right through his poetic career. The Orientalism that later on played so large a part in the French Romantic movement and is evident to a lesser degree in Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, also comes, according to Mrs. Sells, from Senancour, who had often introduced themes from Brahmin and Buddhist philosophy into his work. The lines:

> Listen! you hear the grating roar
> Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
> At their return, up the high strand,
> Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
> With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
> The eternal note of sadness in,

are based on the idea of movement in Nature, "that article of Hindu cosmogony which involves the idea of the world as a scene of change from degeneration to regeneration."

Mrs. Sells has worked hard and has regimented her facts satisfactorily; but her style is annoying. There are too many passages written in a bastard version of the intimate-biography manner, and the itineraries of Arnold's travels in Switzerland are unnecessarily long and wearisome. Also, was it intelligent to illustrate a volume of this type with photographs of lakes and mountains and Swiss hotels, with fragments of verse printed under them as though in a Victorian album? Mrs. Sells announces her intention of producing a second book, concerning French influence in Arnold as a critic; it will stand more chance of being of value if she keeps it free of pretty trappings.

DAVID GASCOYNE

NEW NOVELS

Purple Plague. By FENNER BROCKWAY. *Sampson Low.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Enbury Heath. By STELLA GIBBONS. *Longmans.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The One-Eyed Moon. By MARGUERITE STEEN. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Unrest of Their Time. By NELLIE KIRKHAM. *Cresset Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Brockway has got hold of a very good idea. A trans-Atlantic liner is quarantined for ten years on the discovery of a case of the Purple Plague, which takes that period to appear, occurring on board. A soviet is formed by some Communists on the ship and the book describes the working out of the scheme on what is, after all, the most perfect and watertight material. Where the author is dealing with the practical difficulties, division of labour, breaking down of class distinctions, money, sex, communications with the outside world, he is fascinating. With great intelligence and plausibility he develops the liner, which we see first, like most liners, with a gloomy half-occupied first class, a cheery tourist, a downtrodden third, and an overworked basement, into a utopia in which everybody does four hours' manual labour a day and spends the rest of the time swimming, sunbathing, attending or teaching in the university, writing, printing or publishing, getting up plays, handicrafts, birth control, dances; in fact, doing for the common good whatever they are best equipped for. The picture is so attractive that one wonders the Communist party do not start soviet cruises, where anybody a little off their ego can really be a Communist for a few weeks, with a full-blown revolutionary committee to direct them. Mr. Brockway, however, tends to eye Moscow askance, partly, I suspect, on account of its attitude to intellectuals, who have found themselves, in relation to the Government, occupying the same position as rich men to the early Church, and he is careful to have a highbrow revolutionary Socialist and an American brain truster on his committee to only one authentic Communist. When dealing with love affairs and personalities, the author is less successful. His dialogue is wooden, his writing clumsy ("this is the first time I have been on board an oceanic liner"), and the bevy of highly accessible Amazons who do duty for heroines are quite overwhelming. If only the author had confined himself to the Communist experiment, if only the elderly plague-fighting doctor, in the pure middle-brow tradition of *Arrowsmith* and *Grand Canary*, had been left out! And are there really such depraved creatures as Lord Oliver and the Honourable Isabella Montycroft, aristocrats who descend to tourist third to seduce the members of an honest dancing troupe?

Enbury Heath is much better written, but an exasperating book. I find particularly unwholesome those very English families where brothers and sisters cling together because they are "different." They have a wonderful sense of humour, great integrity, whatever that means, proud, suffering, "artistic" natures, an aptitude for tragic situations and understatement, and usually a stepmother to hound them to death. One discerns a faint backwash from the Earnshaw family coupled with a ripple from the Jane Austen heroine—always so superior to her parents' follies—and a whole tidal wave of *The Constant Nymph* in this kind of book, of which *Enbury Heath* is an example. Three children are left orphans with an "awful heredity." Their father, a hardworking slum doctor, drank and made love to their governesses, so life is bound to be difficult. They set up house together, but Sophia, the sister, is unable to keep her two brothers from dissipation. They kiss girls and go to night clubs. The experiment is a failure.

> A new and sinister element was introduced into life at the cottage. This was beer. It says much for the influence which Sophia unconsciously exerted over her brothers that so far their existence in the Vale had been a beerless one. . . . "Beastly stuff, I hate the smell of it; besides, beer is jolly expensive."

But the beer parties continue, and when the elder brother is twenty-one they leave her and go and live somewhere else. Sophia is alone with her poetry. She will grow up, one feels, and consider jazz soppy, and modern furniture like "a dentist's," and painted finger nails "like bruises," and cocktails "awfully nasty," and all men sex-obsessed. And in the wool-grained pages of some tasteful monthly magazine we shall read her verse.

The One-Eyed Moon shines in Mr. Gollancz's black and yellow. A powerful book. Strong meat—but then Spanish peasants who live among the peaks of the Sierra Nevada must take on some of the violence of the elements that surround them. And besides, there is the sun. . . . The odd thing is that Miss Steen's picture of Granada is authentic; one feels that she knows a great deal about Spain but is obliged to hash it up into what the middle-brow public want to read about Spain, that is to say, into knives and seductions. Perhaps that is why she keeps inserting Spanish words into sentences without translating them; and making the characters talk entirely in proverbs, and using phrases like "Her head swam; she felt the hot words, muttered with youthful emotion, pouring over her like the petals of the roses invoked by Andrés. Her heart passed from her keeping."

This book should assure her a place in the Gollancz eleven, with Doctor Cronin, Louis Golding and L. A. G. Strong all in the same house-colours of black and yellow.

Unrest of Their Time has an original idea, that of a life being lived simultaneously in two epochs, in this case modern and Elizabethan England. The descriptions of a picaresque existence under the Tudors are convincing and interesting, but the theorising about time interferes and the modern part is less satisfactory. In this book, which has a charming cover, The Past is printed in red and makes an agreeable change. Why not green type for the countryside, or pastel shades chosen by the authors? One looks in vain for style, intelligence, observation, imagery. Let the reviewer of novels have more coloured type!

CYRIL CONNOLLY

THE ESTABLISHMENT

Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century. By NORMAN SYKES. *Camb. Univ. Press.* 21*s.*

The impression of the eighteenth-century Church that tradition has left on the mind is well illustrated by the story that is told of Sir William Harcourt's grandfather who became Archbishop of York early in the nineteenth century. At that time there was no bishop in the West Riding or in Lancashire. Somebody said that a confirmation was wanted in the West Riding, and Harcourt is said to have answered that it must be held at Wakefield, for that was as far into the West Riding as a gentleman could be expected to go. This story sums up the characteristics of the Church whose habits and temper provoked the Methodist revolt which its want of statesmanship turned into a rival Church. The Church was aristocratic; it was not over zealous in its view of its spiritual

obligations, and in the new industrial district it was so feebly represented that in comparison with Methodism it hardly counted as a religious force.

Professor Sykes' learned book is based on lectures that he gave at Cambridge. As a composition it has some of the disadvantages of its origin, and the author has not overcome all the difficulties which make the art of turning lectures into a book so rare an accomplishment. But it stands by itself as a detailed study of its subject, and nowhere else will the reader find so full and thorough an account of the life, the politics and the mind of the Church of that time. The popular view of that Church as part of the system which had made the English aristocracy the most powerful governing class in the world is confirmed by his pages. "In regard to the episcopate," Professor Sykes says, "little doubt can be entertained that the particular contribution of that age to its history lay in the importance attained by the bench as a political influence in Parliament and the country, and in the alliance of prelates with the Whig and Tory parties." Such a relationship provides opportunities for sycophancy and time-serving, and such conduct was not unknown. Dr. Goodenough, whom Addington had made Dean of Rochester, wrote to him when the Clerkship of the Pells, a sinecure worth £3,000 a year, was about to become vacant: "I understand that Colonel Barré is in a very precarious state. I hope you will have the fortitude to nominate Harry to be his successor." Harry, Addington's son, was then a boy at Winchester. Harry became Clerk of the Pells and the Dean soon afterwards became a bishop. But Professor Sykes thinks that the reputation of the bishops for time-serving is exaggerated and that a few bad cases have given a wrong impression. On the other hand, the bishops had the prejudices of their class, and, though there were bishops, as there were politicians, who took their own line, the majority were as short-sighted and unimaginative as the mass of the country gentlemen. One of the independent minds was Watson, chiefly known for his invention of a new kind of gunpowder and his neglect of his diocese. Watson produced a scheme of Irish policy which might have saved the two countries from the disasters that Pitt inflicted upon them. Professor Sykes shows that there is more to be said in defence of Watson's treatment of his see than has been supposed hitherto; he pays a just tribute to his sincerity and courage as a public man.

Professor Sykes thinks that the Church suffered from the general reaction that followed the French Revolution, and that but for this the reforms made by Peel and Russell in the 'thirties and 'forties would have been carried before the eighteenth century closed. It is strange that the reforms of the 'thirties and 'forties succeeded so rapidly and with such little friction. Dicey said that by 1850 the Church, so far as the great scandals of pluralism, non-residence and neglect of duty were concerned, resembled rather the Establishment of 1900 than that of 1800. Down to the time of parliamentary reform and the career of Peel there was one fatal obstacle to such reform. Professor Sykes shows that pluralism and non-residence increased in the eighteenth century, and he describes great princes living in wealth and luxury at one end of the scale and at the other "a residuum of degraded and outcast clergy," the men of whose lot Fielding wrote with such bitter indignation. But this system was protected by the strongest force in eighteenth-century society, the sense for the sanctity of property. Watson, the reforming Bishop, and Lord Holland both proposed a redistribution of clerical incomes, but they had to meet the objections that were urged against reforming the pocket boroughs, the objection that if you once touched property in any form with a rough hand, all property would suffer. Voltaire said truly that the Whigs were much better pleased that the bishops should derive their authority from Parliament than from the apostles. In the same way a care of souls, as Lord Harrowby put it, was not primarily a spiritual activity, but "part of the estates of the proprietors, bought and sold like other estates for a valuable consideration upon the faith that they were only subject to taxation in common with other estates."

Professor Sykes' description of the life and work of the clergy show that behind this bad system, with all its encouragement to idleness and self-indulgence, there was a good deal of conscientious energy. De Rochefoucauld, who gave his impressions of England in 1784, thought that all churchmen got off lightly. "Nothing could be simpler—they have no fasts, no fish days, no Lent; even their Sunday service is not obligatory." But some of the bishops took their duties seriously, and Professor Sykes has some interesting records of their visitations to their dioceses. The Bishop of Exeter confirmed some 24,000 persons in three months in the year 1764. Confirmations were apt to be regarded as

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spectacles, and sometimes persons were confirmed several times over. William Cole, the Rector of Bletchley, spoke in his diary of a confirmation as more like a bear baiting than a religious institution, but Professor Sykes defends the bishop and argues that Cole himself was largely to blame. Bishop Gibson decided to separate his visitations from his confirmations for the sake of order, but the Corporation of Boston was put out and did not receive him with the usual ceremony. White Kennett was a very active bishop and went into Rutland, where there had not been a confirmation for forty years. But the high churchmen hated his opinions, and he is known, so far as he is known, not for his arduous work, but because Dr. Welton, the Rector of Whitechapel, has preserved his portrait in an altar-piece of the Last Supper in the face of Judas Iscariot. J. L. HAMMOND

J'ACCUSE

Behind the Scenes of German Justice. By ALFRED APFEL. *Lane.* 6*s.*

End to Illusion. By LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD. *Lane.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Here are two more accusing fingers pointed at post-war Germany; Weimarism emerges as little but thinly veiled Hitlerism. Dr. Apfel's book, although carelessly written, contributes some valuable material to the history of the period, for the writer was privileged to defend such men as Carl von Ossietzky, Georg Grosz, and the heroic Communist Max Hoelz. He was also called in to defend Höhler, the murderer of a rival pimp, Horst Wessel, who has since become the patron saint of New Germany. The trial of Grosz for a drawing of Christ, which was indicted as sacrilege because it was anti-militarist, was perhaps the most remarkable incident in Dr. Apfel's career. Grosz's first judge was outraged, for he believed in war "as the baptism by fire," he shared in fact the official doctrines with which the Hitler Youth is inspired to-day. Finally, however, Grosz was acquitted by an ultra-conservative yet upright judge, Siegert, but tremendous indignation was aroused because—for once—"a man of the Right had accorded justice to a representative of the Left."

End to Illusion, even more than Dr. Apfel's book, suffers from translation, and at first it seems to be nothing but *émigré* raving. Schwarzschild, the well-known Editor of the *Tagebuch*, believes that Germany never has understood—and never will—any argument but force. He therefore sees no alternative to war but universal subjection to Germany, unless we can bring back the impotence of Germany at the time of the Armistice. Few people who know their Germany well will, however, feel too confident in brushing Schwarzschild's pessimism aside. E. W.

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SHORTER NOTICES

Dimitrov. By STELLA O. BLAGOYEVA. *Martin Lawrence.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

To have spent one day at the Reichstag fire trial, as this reviewer did, was enough to create an insatiable interest in everything that had to do with Georgi Dimitrov. His name was not well known, in spite of his long period of apprenticeship and eventual leadership in the Bulgarian Left-wing *Tesnyak* party and the Comintern. But these activities constituted a logical background for the magnificent performance he gave in Germany. Miss Blagoyeva's book marshals the facts essentially, and despite her orthodox Communist approach Dimitrov's career prior to 1933 stands out with an objectivity of its own, though, by putting all the blame on the shoulders of the "social-chauvinists," she tends to lose sight of Dimitrov's vivid personality. Certainly the emotionalised presentation of Dimitrov's mother, who might have been the original for Gorky's *Mother*, is unnecessary. There are many such mothers, who sacrifice themselves for the workers' movement as well as for other ideals. Miss Blagoyeva's whole tendency is to depersonalise and to reduce to dialectical reasoning Dimitrov's strength. His behaviour at this trial may have been correctly Leninist, but it was also instinctive and passionate. Yet for anyone whose knowledge of the Socialist movement is restricted to information about its history in England, France, Germany, Czarist Russia and Italy, the facts that Miss Blagoyeva produces are helpful. The little, turbulent Balkans have had their own set of developments, parallel to those in the larger countries. Perhaps the Balkans are still little enough not to worry about, and the Nazis were unlucky in their choice of Dimitrov as a scapegoat for their Reichstag *Eintopfgericht*.

The Hospital Almoner. By a Committee of the Hospital Almoners' Association. *Allen and Unwin.* 5*s.*

This is a valuable survey of the genesis and development of what has now become a very important branch of social work. The hospital almoner sprang from the brain of the late Sir Charles Loch, the secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, some fifty years ago. The first "lady almoner" was appointed at the Royal Free Hospital in 1895, and her prescribed duties were in conformity with the soundest C.O.S. principles. She was to prevent "abuse" of the hospital by persons who could afford to pay for treatment; to refer the destitute to the Poor Law; and "to recommend suitable cases to join Provident Dispensaries." The almoners of to-day would not recognise themselves in that policeman's role; they have far wider and far more important functions. Their work in its various aspects, as well as the training required for it, is well described by the compilers of this book. It is a book which should be of great interest not only to those in the profession, but to all who are concerned with the social services. And it will be particularly useful for young women who are making the choice of a career.

Confucius In A Tailcoat. By MAURICE DEKOBRA. *Werner Laurie.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

In this social and political study of the new China M. Dekobra, writing from personal experience and observation, gives us a vivid if superficial impression of the westernised Chinese. He writes as if he were the discoverer of China and her peoples, and that all the news we have received hitherto has been compiled in ignorance and tainted by prejudice. This attitude makes for liveliness rather than edification. We see the tailcoats, that Confucius, throughout the story, is to seek. For the greater part of the tour through China he describes M. Dekobra was accompanied or in touch with a Russian adventurer smuggling arms and opium, and his allies, a beautiful half-caste adventuress, and the hardly less adventurous Chinese widow of a Chinese general deceased, and we consequently meet few of the Confucian gentlemen Lady Moore had described for us, whether in tailcoats or otherwise. The book is charmingly illustrated, and has been admirably translated by Mr. Metcalfe Wood.

Joseph Wolff: His Romantic Life and Travels. By H. P. PALMER. *Heath Cranton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Joseph Wolff, the eccentric and lovable father of Sir Drummond Wolff, deserves a wider fame than his own discursive autobiography has afforded him. In this volume, Mr. Palmer, writing for the general reader, gives us the essentials of that remarkable career, which, starting when Wolff, the son of a German Jewish rabbi, left his home to become a Christian, through the years of his missionary travels in the Near East and Central Asia, to his last years as a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England, happily married to the daughter of Lord Orford. It is a remarkable story of a kindly man of character breaking down all social

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barriers, and so imposing himself on his time, that, although he suffered many hardships on his travels, he was received by Mohammedan rulers with ambassadorial pomp and respect.

In the Selected List of Forthcoming Books published last week, we regret that no books appeared from the catalogue of Hamish Hamilton, which came in too late for inclusion. His list includes the following: *Europe, War or Peace?* by Walter Duranty, 2s. 6d.; *Gilbert and Sullivan*, a biography by Hesketh Pearson, 12s. 6d.; *In Search of History* (memoirs of a newspaper correspondent, 1918–30), by Vincent Sheean, 15s.; *Japan and the Pacific*, by Nathaniel Peffer, 10s. 6d.; *Out of Bounds* (memoirs of public school life), by Giles and Esmond Romilly, 7s. 6d.; *O These Men, These Men!* a novel by Angela Thirkell, 7s. 6d.; and a novel by Mary Agnes Hamilton, *Life Sentence*, 8s. 6d.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

THERE still seem to be a good many people about, who having omitted to listen properly to a gramophone for the last fifteen years, continue to describe it as a "horrible instrument," to which no truly musical person would willingly listen. I should like to "forcibly feed" these people with the new recording of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Serge Koussewitsky (H.M.V. D.B. 2346–51), with which the H.M.V. company nobly retrieves the rather painful impression made by its recent recording of the same composer's 9th. For this set is superb, alike in performance and in recording. Koussewitsky's conducting of this most thrilling of symphonies has that combination of passion and restraint which we associate, in this country, with the name of Sir Hamilton Harty. Less dramatic than Beecham or Albert Coates (who made the last authoritative recording of this symphony), he yet allows none of Beethoven's vigour and mysterious profundity to escape him or us. The oboe, so important in this work and until recently so apt to fade out in recording, is here particularly remarkable; and the horns, in the trio of the Scherzo, do not "bubble" a single note—an infrequent feat.

Less startling, but no less delightful, is Mozart's exquisite *Linz Symphony*, recorded by Fritz Busch and the B.B.C. Orchestra (H.M.V. D.B. 2191–3). This rendering of a singularly happy work is remarkable for the feathery clarity and beautiful balance between wood-wind and strings which is always so striking a feature of Busch's conducting. The recording is admirable, except for a slight tendency to go out of tune in the first movement, a fault which, I have noticed, tends to recur in works in C major.

To conclude the list of classical works for orchestra, the records of Bach's *Fifth Brandenburg Concerto*, by the Berlin Opera Orchestra under Alois Melichar (Decca, L.Y. 6101–4) is especially excellent. The surface of Decca records has improved very much of late, with a resultant increase of clarity in the music. The cembalo part in this work is particularly brilliant. From the same company comes Berlioz's popular *Carnaval Romain* overture, played by the same orchestra under Erich Kleiber (Decca C.A. 8197). This is a very vivid rendering; the recording is excellent in the quiet passages, but rather harsh in the climaxes. I wish, by the way, that this company could be persuaded to give us some more Berlioz—the *King Lear* and *Francs Juges* overtures, for instance, or the lovely slow movement from the *Romeo and Juliet* symphony, or the weirdly impressive *Funeral March for the last scene of Hamlet* which Sir Hamilton Harty revived last Wednesday.

Turning now to "middle-brow" music, I feel sure that a great many people will be curious to hear Rachmaninoff's latest work—a *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, played by the composer and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski (H.M.V. D.B. 2426–8). The theme is the well-known one already treated by Brahms and Liszt, but Rachmaninoff manages to turn and twist it again into a set of variations of brilliant virtuosity. Musically, the work is thin, but it has all the facile romanticism and—in the 18th variation especially—the melodious quality that have made this composer deservedly popular.

The Columbia recording of the *Choral Dances from Prince Igor*, played by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, assisted by the Leeds Choir (Col. 369 and 370), is rather disappointing. The orchestral playing is very good, but Russian singers are needed for this kind of music. English choirs, however good, always impart a "sacred" quality which is here most inappropriate. The same choir's recording of the *Kyrie* from Mozart's *C minor Mass* (Col. L.B. 19) shows it in its proper element.

By far the best of the chamber music records this month are those of Mozart's *Quintet in C*, played by the Pro Arte Quartet and Ethel Hobday (second viola) (H.M.V. B.D. 2383–6). This is a more weighty affair than the *Linz Symphony*, but it should be acquired by all who love its great companion, the *G minor Quintet*, with which it compares favourably, especially in the symphonic slow movement and in the finale. The beautifully balanced playing of the Pro Arte Quartet, who always seem to me to record better than any other ensemble, gives the work all its simple grandeur.

I do not know how many recordings of Bach's *Air on the G String* already exist—a good many, I should imagine; but Franz von Vecsy has added a suitably resonant one (Decca, P.O. 5115). Resonant is also the word for Feuermann, who is probably the fourth best cellist alive (after Casals and Piatigorsky and Cassado); but his powers are not particularly well displayed by a transcription of a Chopin *Valse* and a commonplace *Serenata* by Sgambati (Col. L.B. 18). A re-recording of Dvořák's popular *Concerto* (the same cellist made one, some years ago, for the Parlophone Company) would be more to the point.

Those who like Chopin's *Valses* (I do), and those who also admire Cortot's playing (I do not), will do well to acquire the complete set just published (H.M.V. D.B. 2311–16). The recording is beyond reproach, but the pianist indulges in *rubato* to an absurd extent, and the result is unpleasantly sentimental. Far better, *qua* interpretation, is Horowitz's playing of Beethoven's *Thirty-Two* enigmatic *Variations* (H.M.V. D.A. 1387–8). Solomon's rendering of Chopin's *F minor Fantaisie*—one of the composer's most thrilling and varied works (Col. DX 668 and 9)—is brilliant, if rather hard and superficial.

Solo voices are charmingly represented by Ina Souez and Heddle Nash, in a duet and a solo from *Cosi fan Tutte* (Col. DX 671). The balance is excellent and there is no unpleasant "edge" to the loud notes.

The dance hit of the moment (I can't think why) seems to be *You and the Night and the Music*, from the revue *Stop Press*. The best version of this is by Leo Reisman and his band (Brunswick R.L. 213). That of Ambrose (Decca, F 5446) is inferior, because of the "galumphing" orchestration, but the record has the advantage of possessing the other popular *Stop Press* item *Easter Parade* on the obverse. Apart from this, the only dance records that seem

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Headlinese

It has been left to Mr. Heinrich Straumann, a Swiss student of English, to produce a book on newspaper headlines, showing them, as *The Times* puts it, "in their true colours" and with "a language, a grammar, a logic all their own."

Seeing references to this book in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and other papers, led us to glance back at some of the headlines we have used in these columns. We wonder if any reader remembers our first—"What about a Revolution?" It appeared in April, 1926, and told the story of a well-known Labour supporter who came to order a Goss suit. Jokingly we asked him—"What about a revolution? Will you have two buttons on the jacket front this time instead of three?" We went on to show how, in some matters at any rate, Labourites can be ultra-diehards!

Another piece of copy we always liked was "Week-end Comfort All the Week," because it stressed a point about our clothes that we think is of first importance—comfort. The most formal clothes should be as comfortable as the least formal. "Spend—and Save the Difference" called to our minds the warnings which this and a few other journals expressed about the dangers of over-saving, public and private. We rather think that many people are still not spending what they could comfortably afford to spend towards helping the wheels of industry to turn a little faster. On the other hand, there is a certain pleasure in making a suit last a long time, but if you wear it longer than you should, it means so many hours less work and pay for your tailor.

Three other specimens of Goss "headlinese" were: "Do You Deserve Peace?" "Backstraps to Turkey" and "Our Chinese Puzzle." Each told its little story and provided the jam around the pill!

And now for the pill! Every Goss garment is as near perfection as thirty years of first-grade tailoring practice can make it. The measuring, cutting and fitting are done personally by the two Goss brothers and Mr. Whitehouse. Only the best materials (seen and unseen) are used, and there is always a choice to satisfy the most exacting taste.

For their standard Goss clothes are inexpensive. Modest first-floor premises, no expensive shop front and cash arrangements with all customers, old and new, make possible a very reasonable scale of charges. A Goss lounge suit of the very best materials costs from Eight to Ten Guineas, whilst there is a good range of thoroughly dependable materials costing no more than Six Guineas for a suit. Dress suits from Nine Guineas. Overcoats from Six Guineas. Whatever you pay, the standard of Goss workmanship is the same.

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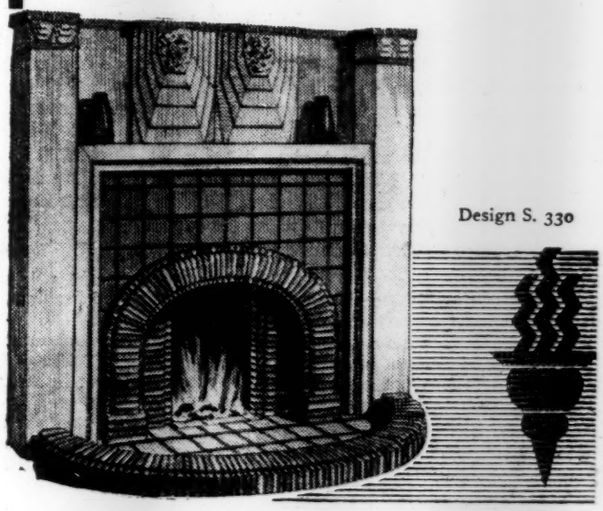
GOSS
Tailoring

15 Newgate Street, London, E.C.1

Opposite Post Office Station *'Phone: City 7159*

"My beauty's more than skin deep—"

SAYS THE DEVON FIRE



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WORKS: HEATHFIELD, NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON.
See our Stand No. 62, Grand Hall, Ground Floor, Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, March 26—April 18.

to me at all outstanding are *Blue Moon*, a particularly haunting Rumba, played by Roy Fox and his Band (Decca, F. 5401); *Rain*, by Jan Gerber and Orchestra (H.M.V. B.D. 116), a good tune both to listen and to dance to; and *Dancing With My Shadow* (H.M.V. B.D. 121), for listening to, but perhaps not for dancing.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 261

Set by H. L. Morrow

Daniel O'Connell, "The Liberator," devised an effective means of shoo-ing off hawkers and beggars who accosted him in the Dublin streets by turning round and addressing them as "You Quadratic Equation," "You Parallelepiped," "You Lowest Common Denominator," "You Greatest Common Multiple."

A prize is offered for modern equivalents to this type of abuse, sounding furiously, but signifying nothing, such as might be addressed by any four of the following, speaking in their own technology:

The Marchese Marconi, Einstein, Mr. J. M. Keynes, The Archbishop of London, Mrs. Amy Mollison, Mr. Julian Huxley, Sir Arthur Keith, the Poet Laureate, Lord Lonsdale, Lord Ashfield, Mr. Augustus John, Epstein, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Mr. Walter Elliot.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 22nd.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 259

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The speeches of prominent members of the National Government have been increasingly irradiated by a resolutely cheerful spirit like that shown in the poems of Mrs. Wilhelmina Stitch. For poems expressing in her style the attitude of any one of them, we offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

A belated entry for the competition on which Mr. Stonier reported last week has reached me. It begins amusingly:

> Faithful competitors, down to a task
> As gruesome as e'en stoniest might ask!
> Could *he* be stonier that set these themes—
> —His assets nightmares, born of basest dreams?

The author went on to ask for a competition of "vernal poems." And "B. H." begins his Fragrant Minute in a most appropriately vernal style:

> Daffodils are here again, crocuses begin to sprout. Never mind the wind or rain; waterproofs will keep them out.

(I envy the sheltered lives led by some of the competitors: several had not realised that Mrs. Stitch, like Monsieur Paul Fort, prints her verses as prose.) "D. C. S." has one brilliant stanza in his *The P.M. log*.

> Prime Ministers their cross must bear, as lesser men have done, but I will ne'er doubt or despair; the fight is almost won.

Dion Clayton Calthrop sends some neat verses, but alas! they entirely lack the cosy note of authentic Stitchery. H. C. Riddell and V. Rigby are among the best of the others.

With some hesitation and without much enthusiasm, I propose for the First Prize, Allan M. Laing:

A FEATHERED GOSSIP

A little bird from Downing Street is whispering in my ear; and what he tells me is a treat for Englishmen to hear. The worrld has drrained the bitter cup: we've crrossed the Rubicon; and now Life's going up and up, and on and on and on. The army of poor workless wights is dwindling by degrees, and no discordant whisper blights our Empire overseas. Hard times no longer tread our toes: the poor are filled with glee; and just as frost in springtime goes, the slums will cease to be. This joyful news, says Birdie bold, comes straight from the P.M.—the shepherd of our National fold, whom Communists condemn! My birdie's cheerful chirp I swell in merry lilting rhymes; for God is good and all is well and these are piping times.

ALLAN M. LAING

The Second Prize goes to W. Summers: his verses cannot be said to express the attitude of any member of the Government, perhaps, but I think they are worth printing.

A FRAGRANT TIME COMING!

There are no unemployed to-day, unhesitatingly I say, except comparatively few, who find, it seems, no work to do. But Unemployed, I envy you!

That man is blessed, beyond a doubt, who has the least to fret about. How nice his lot must be, how sweet—not far to go to make ends meet: no worry with the Country's gold, no Man to see who catches cold, no tedious luncheons—like poor Jim—no work to do! I envy him!

Though much already is achieved, I state, and trust to be believed, the Government will not neglect to persevere in this respect, until the country as a whole is out of work and on the dole.

W. SUMMERS

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 116.—THE CANINE LEAGUE

"We won our last match," writes my nephew, "by the odd goal in five. The only match in the Canine League competition in which any team scored three goals!

"Alec's team finished with two goal-less draws."

The completed Canine League Table was as follows:

Team.	Pl'd.	W.	D.	L.	Pts.	Goals.	
						For	Agst.
Terriers ..	4	4	0	0	8	6	2
Pointers ..	4	1	2	1	4	2	2
Beagles ..	4	1	1	2	3	3	3
Bulldogs ..	4	1	1	2	3	4	6
Mastiffs ..	4	1	0	3	2	3	5

How did the Beagles fare against the Mastiffs?

PROBLEM 114.—THE NEUROTIC

An easy cryptogram.

The first eight letters are an anagram of NEUROTIC:

ONCUIRET

Arrange in their alphabetical order the odd-numbered letters and then the even-numbered letters:

CEIONRTU

Now arrange the letters of each of the other letter groups in corresponding order:

TWOMILLI
ONSINGOL
DINGOTSI
NTHEHOLD

This gives the message: "*Two millions of gold ingots in the hold.*"

But every solver, so far, has missed the real point of this cryptogram. What use is a memorandum of treasure-trove without the ship's position? Take the word NEUROTIC and place underneath each letter a figure based on the order of letters in the anagram ONCUIRET:

NEUROTIC
2 7 4 6 1 8 5 3

This gives the position of the wreck: Lat. 27° 46′ N., Long. 18° 53′ W. "Not far from the Canary Islands," supplied this clue.

PROBLEM 113.—THEFT OF WINIFRED'S PEARLS

Award is held over pending the review of various submissions. The material sent me is so elaborate that I shall want a fairly free week-end in which to deal with it.

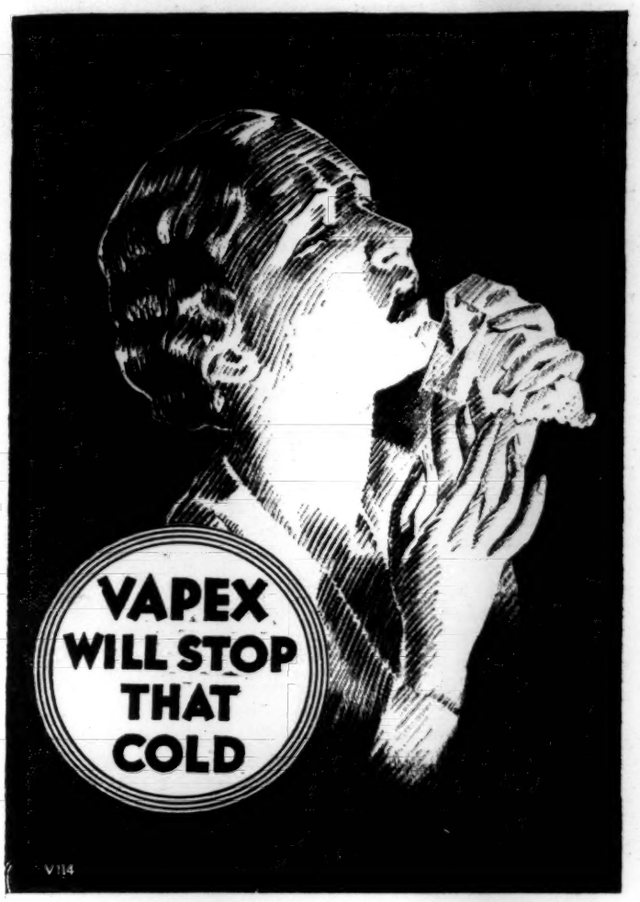
PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

CALIBAN



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HALIFAX

THE WORLD'S LARGEST BUILDING SOCIETY

TOTAL ASSETS EXCEED - - £102,000,000

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS to be presented to the Shareholders at the Annual General Meeting of the Society, to be held at Halifax, on Monday, the 25th March, 1935.

The Directors have great pleasure in submitting to the Members the 82nd Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, showing the operations of the Society during the Financial Year ended the 31st January, 1935. It is very gratifying to the Directors to be able to report that the business of the Society in the past year has been entirely satisfactory, and there have been large increases in the total assets and membership, and a record sum has been advanced upon mortgages.

It is interesting to record that since the amalgamation of the Halifax Permanent and the Halifax Equitable Building Societies on the 1st February, 1928, the united Halifax Building Society has more than doubled its business, as indicated in the following statement, namely :—

	Open Accounts.	Invested Funds.	Total Assets.	Reserve Funds.
1935	622,323	£98,794,103	£102,797,613	£3,853,509
1928	329,224	£45,520,281	£46,981,482	£1,461,200
Increase in 7 years	293,099	£53,273,822	£55,816,131	£2,392,309

ASSETS. The Total Assets of the Society at the end of the year amounted to £102,797,613, showing an increase of £10,154,922. This increase would have been greater but for the severe restrictions placed upon the receipt of investments during the year.

RESERVE FUNDS. The Reserve Funds, after providing for all interest and bonus allotted up to the date of the accounts, stand at £3,853,509, being an increase of £499,945.

OVER £21,000,000 ADVANCED DURING YEAR.

MORTGAGES. During the past year the total volume of business in the Mortgage Department surpassed all previous records. The heavy demand for new mortgage advances was unprecedented, and the total sum advanced amounted to £21,694,200, showing an increase of £3,146,107 over the total recorded in the preceding year. The number of new borrowers was 37,516, being an increase of 4,576 over last year's figure. As an indication of the immense popularity of the Society's mortgage service, it is worthy of note that the average amount actually advanced per month exceeded £1,800,000, mainly to assist in the purchase of dwellinghouse property. The total amount now owing upon mortgages is £78,099,086, showing an increase during the year of £8,491,555, and the total number of borrowers is 198,922, an increase of 19,320. Of this total 78% are in respect of mortgage advances where the present debt does not exceed £500, and the average amount owing on all the Society's mortgages is only £392 each.

The mortgage accounts are again in a very satisfactory condition, and there are no properties in possession of the Society to be reported in the Statutory Schedule, and no properties in possession of Receivers on behalf of the Society as mortgagee.

SHARE AND DEPOSIT FUNDS. The amount standing to the credit of Investing Shareholders and Depositors was £98,794,103, an increase of £9,654,977 over the preceding year.

PROFITS. The net profit for the year, after payment of expenses and Income Tax and providing for all interest due to Shareholders and Depositors up to the date of the account, was £495,641. The Directors recommend that there shall be distributed, in addition to the interest, a bonus of 10s. per cent. to Paid-up Shareholders, Class 1, and a bonus of £1 per cent. to the Monthly Subscription Investing Shareholders. This distribution will make a total yield to the Paid-up Shareholders in Class 1 of £4 per cent., and to the Subscription Shareholders of £4 10s. per cent., both Interest and Bonus being free of Income Tax.

ACCOUNTS. The new accounts opened during the year numbered 110,907, and the total number of Shareholders' and Depositors' accounts open at the end of the year was 622,323, being an increase of 54,180 accounts.

The Directors desire most warmly to congratulate the members upon the exceedingly satisfactory business of the year and the strong and sound financial position revealed in the Annual Statement of Accounts. Not only has the past financial year been one of great prosperity, but a new landmark has been established in the annals of the building society movement by the fact that the Halifax Building Society's assets now exceed One hundred million pounds. By this outstanding achievement the Society has still further enhanced and strengthened its predominant position as by far the largest Building Society in the World.

ENOCH HILL,
President and Managing Director.

New Balance Sheet and Full Information Free on Application.

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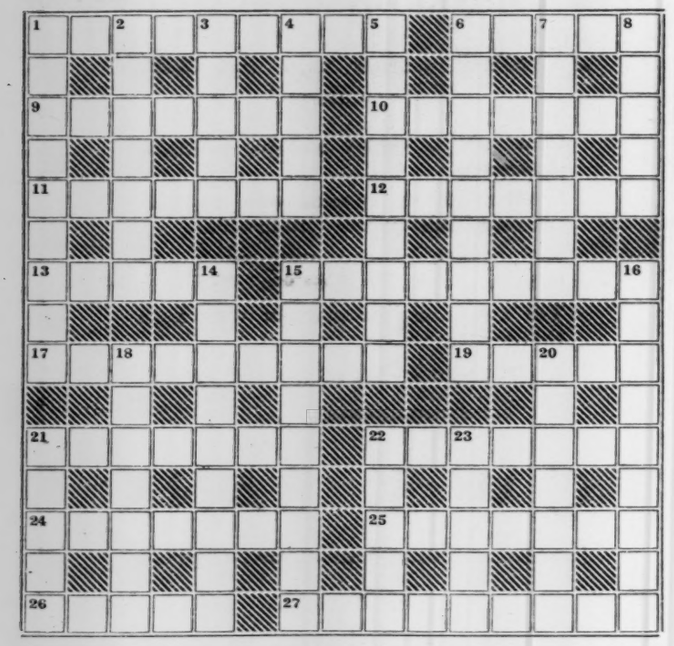
WEEK-END CROSSWORD 262

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss M. L. Marsden, Wigton, Cumberland

ACROSS

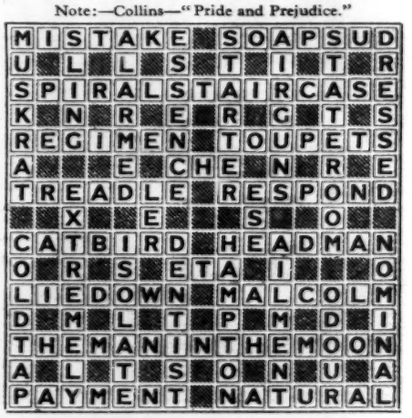
1. A little reel party?
6. What Mr. Gradgrind wanted.
9. Prisonhouses that obviously cannot be closed down.
10. No more French to perplex us.
11. Give the lie back to a publisher.
12. A l t e r natively whether the water is frozen in the hole.
13. This stone is a peach.
15. The speed of the mail van of course.
17. Medicinal measures.
19. Gentlefolk don't wear them on the jaw.
21. This would be the colour of a sovereign now.
22. Cut off a pound.
24. Obsolete young people.
25. A sailor brought before Sully.
26. Spin this drum for racing a yacht.
27. Does it necessitate feeling one's way?

DOWN

1. All the same they may help the team to present a united front.
2. How Sir Charles Napier described his conquest of Sind.
3. A word often heard in 5.
4. Liking in a sense.
5. Their occupants should make no outlay.
6. Windows shaped like arc lamps?
7. "Very few days passed in which Mr. —— did not walk to Rosings."
8. A use is still made of her.
14. Many a good report is due to it.
15. {ER / PL}
16. Woodwork of a novel kind.
18. A fiendish epithet.
20. A hanging matter that isn't a draw theatrically.
21. Put me among the cut corn.
22. Where Italians "operate."
23. One in these clothes for an interesting return.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Note:—Collins—"Pride and Prejudice."



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15th century Refectory.
Wonderful old Beams. Blazing Log Fires.
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Terms from 3½ guineas a week.

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RYE, Sussex. Old Hope Anchor Hotel. Sunny, comfortable. Quiet situation. Lovely views, H. and c. water all bedrooms. A.A. 'Phone 126.

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3. A SOLUTION FOR THOSE WHO FIND LONDON HECTIC AND THE SUBURBS DULL

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S. DEVON. Sun-trap Bungalow, furnished, very quiet, beaut. sit.; extensive sea views. 2 sitt., 3 bed., bathroom, kitchen, central htg., el. light. and cooking. Large garden, garage. Rent according to period. MISS CROOK, Sandwich, Kent.

GOOD home for widower with child, comp. for another. Lovely country, easy distance daily London. Box 694, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

LARGE attic-like room, furn. or unfurn., 1 storey house, 3 windows, sleep-out platform, lovely country, acre garden, garage, mod. conv., Bucks. Vegtn. meals and slight service poss. Suit student, writer, someone wanting home, easy journey London. Box 695, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

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London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH. The Dominant Sex. Wed., S.

APOLLO. Hyde Park Corner. Wed. & Sat.

COLISEUM. Televariety. Sat.

COMEDY. Mrs. Nobby Clark. Wed., Sat.

GLOBE. Youth at the Helm. Tues., Thur

HIPPODROME. Yes, Madam? Th. & Sat.

LYRIC. Theatre Royal. Wed. & Sat.

PHOENIX. "Glory Be ——" Thurs., Sat.

PICCADILLY. There Go All of Us. W., S.

QUEEN'S. Wind & the Rain. Wed. & Sat

ROYALTY. "Frolic Wind." Th., Sat., 2.30.

ST. MARTIN'S. Man of Yesterday. Tu., Fri.

SAVOY. Hi-Diddle Diddle! Wed., Sat.

SHAFTESBURY. Ringmaster. Thurs. & Sats.

VAUDEVILLE. Summer's Lease. W., Sat.

WESTMINSTER. Weds. & Sats.
Sitting on a Fence.

WHITEHALL. Viceroy Sarah. Tues. & Sat.

WINTER GARDEN. Tues. & Fri.
The Moon in the Yellow River.

WYNDHAM'S. Sweet Aloes. Wed. & Sat.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. Tem. 6404.
Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Wed. & Sat., at 2.30.
THE DOMINANT SEX.
By Michael Egan.

APOLLO. (Ger. 2663). 8.30. Wed., Sat..2.30.
HYDE PARK CORNER by Walter Hackett.
MARION LORNE. GODFREY TEARLE.
GORDON HARKER. J. H. ROBERTS.

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COMEDY. 8.30. WED., SAT., 2.30. Whi. 2578.
MARIE NEY in
MRS. NOBBY CLARK

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. Evenings, 8.30.
Mats., Tues. & Thurs., at 2.30.
OWEN NARES,
ADELE DIXON KAY HAMMOND in
YOUTH AT THE HELM.

HIPPODROME. 8.15. Thur., Sat., 2.30. (Ger. 3272).
BOBBY HOWES & BINNIE HALE in
"YES, MADAM?"
Vera Pearce. Wylie Watson. Bertha Belmore.

LYRIC. Ger. 3686-7. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
MARIE TEMPEST MADGE TITHERADGE ROBERT DOUGLAS.
in THEATRE ROYAL. Produced by Noel Coward.

PHOENIX. 8.30 Thurs., Sat., 2.30. Tem. 8611.
"GLORY BE ——"
By Arnold Ridley.
ION SWINLEY. LYDIA SHERWOOD.

PICCADILLY. Ger. 4506. MON. NEXT.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.
"THERE GO ALL OF US."
MATHESON LANG and BEATRIX THOMSON

QUEEN'S THEATRE. (Ger. 4517).
Evenings, 8.30. Mats., Wed & Sat., 2.30.
THE WIND AND THE RAIN.
London's Longest Run. Now in its 2nd Year.

ROYALTY. (Gerrard 7331).
Evenings 8.30. Matinees, Thurs. & Sats., 2.30.
"FROLIC WIND," by RICHARD PRYCE.
Based on Novel by Richard Oke.

ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE. (Tem. 1443).
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Tues. & Fri., 2.30.
LESLIE BANKS in
MAN OF YESTERDAY.

SAVOY. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30. Last 2 Weeks.
Douglas BYNG, Greta NISSEN, John TILLEY
in the Walker-Nesbitt Revue,
"HI-DIDDLE DIDDLE!"

SHAFTESBURY. Ger. 6666. EVENINGS, 8.30.
GILBERT MILLER presents LAURENCE OLIVIER
in RINGMASTER
Matinees, Thursdays and Saturdays, 2.30.

VAUDEVILLE. Props. J. & R. Gatti. Tem. 4871.
Evgs. at 8.30. Mats., Wed., Sat., 2.30.
"SUMMER'S LEASE."

WESTMINSTER, Palace St., S.W.1. (Vic. 0283).
SITTING ON A FENCE.
A new farce by Anthony Armstrong.
HUGH WAKEFIELD, WINIFRED SHOTTER, MORTON SELTEN.
Nightly, 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
7s. to 1s. 6d. incl., all bookable.

WHITEHALL. (Whi. 6692).
Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Tues. and Sat. at 2.30.
IRENE VANBRUGH in
VICEROY SARAH.

WINTER GARDEN. Holborn 8881.
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Tues. & Fri., 2.30. A Comedy,
THE MOON IN THE YELLOW RIVER.

WYNDHAM'S. Temple Bar 3028.
Evenings 8.30, Matinees Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
DIANA WYNYARD in
SWEET ALOES, by Jay Mallory.

PICTURE THEATRES

ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford St. Ger. 2981.
WILLY FORST'S
Viennese Sensation of Europe
MASKERADE (A),
with Paula Wessely

EVERYMAN (Opposite Hampstead Tube Station).
MONDAY, 18th MARCH, for SEVEN DAYS,
The Famous Russian Film,
THE BLUE EXPRESS (A).
Directed by ILYA TRAUBERG.
Parking facilities. Seats bookable by 'phone, Ham 2285.

NORTH LONDON FILM SOCIETY. Sunday, March 31st. First London perf. of MEN AND JOBS (Macheret) the great Russian sound film of the Five Year Plan, also *RAIN* by Joris Ivens.
Write SEC., 6 Carysfort Rd., N.16. Clissold 9375.

DANCE

SOCIALIST LEAGUE DANCE at the Suffolk Galleries, Suffolk Street, Nr. Trafalgar Square, on Saturday, March 23rd. Dancing 7.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. Dress comfortably. Tickets 2s. 6d. from COLLETT'S BOOKSHOP, 66 Charing Cross Road.

TRAINING CENTRES

THE QUEEN'S SECRETARIAL COLLEGE, 255 CROMWELL ROAD, S. KENSINGTON, S.W.5. provides an efficient training in delightful surroundings, ALL SECRETARIAL SUBJECTS TAUGHT. *Prospectus on application.* Frobisher 3642.

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THE BEDFORD TRAINING COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS, 14 The Crescent, Bedford. Recognised by the Board of Education. Principal: MISS MARGARET SPENCE. Students are prepared for the examination of the National Froebel Union. The course of training is for 3 years. Fees with residence £94 10s. to £100 16s. Fees without residence £31 10s.—For particulars apply SECRETARY.

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REPERTORY THEATRES

BIRMINGHAM Repertory.
Evenings 7.30. Mat., Thurs. 2.30.
Misalliance. By Geo. Bernard Shaw.

CROYDON Repertory.
Evenings 8. Sat., 5 & 8.15.
My Lady Wears a White Cockade.
By Ronald Gow.

HARROGATE White Rose Players.
Evenings 8.15. Sat., 6.35 & 9.
Wuthering Heights.
By Mary Pakington and Olive Walter.

LIVERPOOL Repertory.
Evenings 7.45. Mat., Sat., 2.30.
Libel. By Edward Wooll.

MANCHESTER Repertory.
Evenings 7.30.
The Brontës of Haworth Parsonage.
By John Davison.

NORTHAMPTON Repertory.
Evenings 6.30 & 8.50.
For the Love of Mike. [By H. F. Maltby.

PLYMOUTH Repertory.
Evenings 7.45. Fri., 8.15. Mats., Sat., 2.45.
Candida, and **How He Lied to Her Husband.** By G. Bernard Shaw.

The Repertory Theatres whose announcements appear above are members of the Association of Repertory Theatres. *For information concerning Theatres belonging to this Association, or qualified to belong to it, apply to the Honorary Secretary, Bache Matthews, 7 Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1.*

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YOU MAY SEARCH the whole of London to find a quieter or more homely spot for Lunch, Dinner or Late Supper than RULES, of Maiden Lane, Covent Garden. Estd. 1780. Licensed till midnight.

YOU can have small private dinner parties, up to 12 guests, by candle light in an 18th Century panelled room at the RED LION RESTAURANT. Menus and prices by arrangement. Red Lion Sq., W.C.1. HOL. 7721.

MISCELLANEOUS

MACKIE'S EDINBURGH SHORTBREAD is crisp, rich, enticing and very famous. We pack and post to any address. Per tin, by inland post, 2s. 10d., 5s. 1d., 7s. 3d., 9s. 3d., 11s. 6d. Foreign postages on request. J. W. MACKIE & SONS, LTD., 108 Princes Street, Edinburgh, 2.

BRAMLEY Seedling Apples, National Mark Fancy Grade, case about 40 lb., 7s. 6d.; half case, 4s. LESLIE CLARK, Walters Farm, Galleywood, Essex.

SUPERVISED afternoon play-group in private nursery, and garden in Belsize Park Gardens. Few vacancies, for children 3 to 4 years. Montessori methods. Box 703, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

SWITZERLAND. Girls wishing study French received in good family. Moderate terms. Write E.T. Villa Studio Jurigoz, Lausanne.

ANYONE interested in 3 months' summer cruise in small yacht in Baltic or elsewhere, sharing expenses, please write Box 704, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

WANTED a Swearing Parrot. Write Box 697, N.S. &N. 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

JOHN PEEL TWEEDS—woven from pure Cumberland wool, warm and weather resisting. Full suit length 35s. 6d. or 10s. 6d. per yard, 56in. wide. Send for patterns. REDMAYNE & SONS, LTD., No. 10, Wigton, Cumberland.

BOOKPLATES. Heraldic and Pictorial, designed from £2 2s. Particulars from OSBORNE, 27 Eastcastle St., London, W.1.

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THE CASANI SCHOOL OF BALLROOM DANCING. 90 Regent Street (Piccadilly Circus), Private Lessons daily, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., in all the latest ballroom dances. Guaranteed to teach you steps of any dance in THREE PRIVATE LESSONS, £1 1s. 0d. Practice Classes every Tuesday, 8.30 to 10.30 p.m. 3s. 'PHONE REGENT 4438-9.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THIS PROBLEM OF THE EXCHANGES—GOLD OUTLOOK AND RANDFONTEIN—MEXICAN EAGLE AND V.O.C.—PRUDENTIAL

Is the dollar any longer undervalued? I think not, and I ventured last week to question the currency valuations of Major Angas. It is due to Major Angas to say that before his latest pamphlet* was actually distributed to his startled public he had written a preface correcting it. I had not read this preface when I wrote last week, but I hasten to quote the following passage: "The recent decline in the pound plus the rise in American internal prices may have largely wiped out the undervaluation of the dollar on which the optimistic *immediate* forecasts for gold shares in this pamphlet are based." Having regard to purchasing power parities the dollar at 4.73⅞ is certainly not undervalued in terms of the pound. Last August the *Economist* made a calculation of the respective valuations of dollar and franc on the basis of the respective purchasing power parities. It found that the dollar was then about 7.6 per cent. undervalued and the franc 13 per cent. overvalued. Since August, 1934, the dollar has appreciated from 5.03½ to 4.73⅞ and the American internal price level has risen by 3 per cent. Thus the dollar is now very slightly overvalued. The franc in the same period has appreciated from 75 3/16 to 71¾ and the French price level fallen by about 4 per cent. Thus the franc is nearly 14 per cent. overvalued. "We shall make every effort," said M. Flandin at Lyons last Sunday, "to hasten the stabilisation of the great currencies, because that is a condition of the resumption of international trade and prosperity." Through the increasing overvaluation of the franc M. Flandin's efforts seem to be aimed at putting so great a strain on the weaker members of the gold bloc that they will be forced to devalue. As soon as this happens, the franc will be the sole currency seriously out of equilibrium—unless in the meantime President Roosevelt has started an international race in currency depreciation by devaluing the American dollar to 50 cents gold. The problem before our statesmen is, therefore, to maintain the dollar and the pound more or less in a state of equilibrium until the gold bloc cracks up and France can be informed that only an overvalued franc is holding up currency stabilisation. But do you believe that the British Exchange Equalisation Fund is working to this end in co-operation with the American Exchange Equalisation Fund? I don't.

* * *

Before leaving this controversial subject, I would like to ask Major Angas why he considers that the *immediate* prospects of gold shares are not so bullish now that the dollar is no longer undervalued. The sterling price of gold will be determined by the franc-sterling exchange, and if the franc overvaluation increases, so will the sterling price of gold. It is possible that the time will come when the entire European gold bloc suspends the gold standard and no central bank is buying gold at a fixed price except the American Reserve Banks. Will this situation frighten the gold hoarders into unloading their gold holdings? I cannot tell. Nor can Major Angas. But if the gold hoarders became convinced that stabilisation would be effected sooner or later at a higher price for gold, there would be a bigger demand than ever for gold for hoarding purposes. While personally I share Major Angas' distrust of the *long-term* outlook for gold, I am bound to say that institutional investors are buying gold shares ostensibly for permanent investment with the utmost confidence in the metal. Randfontein Estates, for example, have risen recently from 53*s.* to 58*s.* 6*d.* This company's enormous mine has a life estimated at forty years. The average value of its ore reserves is 4.7 dwt. As the company is purposely crushing ore of low grade (about 3½ dwt.) at the present time, its profits may be maintained simply by increasing the grade of ore treated if the price of gold were to fall or costs of production to rise. Dividends this year are estimated at 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per share. At 58*s.* 6*d.* the prospective dividend yields are £7 14*s.* per cent. or £8 13*s.* 6*d.* per cent. or, allowing for amortisation at 4 per cent., £6 0*s.* 6*d.* per cent. or £7 per cent. respectively. Why worry if the length of period for which it is safe to forecast any investment is about six months? Institutions *must* invest for the long term and a yield of 6 per cent. to 7 per cent. over the next forty years is irresistible.

* * *

Oil companies are accustomed to hard knocks, but when the Mexican Eagle Oil Company is asked to deposit £2,000,000 in gold before it can appeal to the Supreme Court, it is, surely, a little cruel. The Mexican Eagle has been in peaceful possession of a certain property in the Amatlan district since before the war, but the illegitimate offspring of a former owner of this property made a claim against the heirs and obtained a decree in a local court declaring him to be the sole heir. A Mexican company was formed to take over the claim of this bastard and obtained judgment for 20,000,000 pesos as compensation for the oil extracted by the Mexican Eagle from this Amatlan property. The Mexican Eagle appealed to the Supreme Court and deposited the required £2,000,000 in sterling in London for the credit of the Banco de Mexico. The Mexican Government, however, has refused to accept any bond other than gold deposited in Mexico City. What is the Mexican Eagle to do? The company has wisely called a meeting of its shareholders and a committee has been appointed to advise the directors. Meanwhile, dealings in Mexican and Canadian Eagle shares (on account of the joint guarantees) have been suspended. It seems a clear case for our Foreign Office to make diplomatic representations, for the present Mexican Government seems to be combining economic nationalism and Bolshevism together in one grand attack upon foreign capital. In a note on this page on May 5th, 1934, I strongly advised shareholders to exchange from Mexican Eagle, on account of the political risks, into the shares of producing oil companies situated more comfortably than those in Mexico. I instanced Venezuelan Oil Concessions. Now I am wondering whether Venezuela will not be the next country to blackmail foreign oil companies. President Gomez is a very old man and his illegitimate offspring are said to number eighty-six. It would only require a few of his children to lodge frivolous claims against the oil companies to make oil production in Venezuela extremely expensive. However, if President Gomez will survive until the 1934 accounts of Venezuelan Oil Concessions are published, which will be in May, all may be well. The company sells its output to the Royal Dutch-Shell group which pays a price dependent on that of American bunker fuel oil with allowance for transportation, the company's crude oil being of a fuel oil quality. Production costs have been increased by the premium on the Venezuelan bolivar (which has not been effectively devalued) while revenues have been reduced by the discount on the dollar. However, in 1934 fuel oil prices (calculated on a sterling basis) have shown a higher average and production has increased by about 6½ per cent. It is therefore possible that an increase in the company's dividend will be seen. At the present price of 1⅞ the shares return a yield of £5 6*s.* 9*d.* on the basis of a 10 per cent. dividend and £6 13*s.* 3*d.* per cent. on the basis of 12½ per cent.

* * *

Early spring brings the annual reports of our insurance companies, and on another page will be found the figures of the annual report of the Prudential Assurance Company. Its millions are of national as well as investment importance. Last year its total assets increased by £13 millions to £290½ millions. Very soon it will be in receipt of an income of £1 million per week. Last year's income at £50.8 millions showed an increase of £667,083. The aggregate amount of life assurance now in force in its two branches—ordinary and industrial—is £752 millions—close on one-tenth of the National Debt. Clearly, if ever a Labour Government came into power it would have to sign a pact with the Prudential. If either worked in opposition to the other, the financial machine would stop. The finger of the Prudential is in most financial pies and of British Government securities (including guaranteed loans) it holds no less than £87 millions. But let us turn to the investment side. You can invest either in the "A" or "B" shares of the Prudential. The "A" shares take the divisible surplus profits of the Life Departments and 25 per cent. of the profits of the General Branch. The "B" shares take 75 per cent. of the divisible profits of the General Branch, but have no share in the profits of the Life Departments. The following are the current prices and yields:

	Present Price.	Dividends.	Gross Yield %.
Prudential "A" shares of £1, fully paid	34½	18/4⅘ (tax free)	£3 9 3
Prudential "B" shares of £1, 4/– paid	95/6	1/6 (tax free)	£2 0 6

The underwriting profits of the General Branch last year were about the same as in 1933. This was somewhat disappointing to Prudential "fans." But there is no reason why dividends on the "A" shares should not be increased when times are good.

* *Gold Boom or Slump.* By L. L. B. Angas. *St. Clements Press.* 5*s.*

The STRONGHOLD *of* THRIFT

THE PRUDENTIAL

ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

CHIEF OFFICE: HOLBORN BARS · LONDON · E.C.1

Extracts from the **EIGHTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT**

Year Ending 31st December, 1934

ORDINARY BRANCH	New Sums Assured	£25,528,783
	Total Sums Assured and Bonus	£235,720,483
	Premiums Received	£12,443,227
	Policyholders' Share of Profits	£2,434,554
INDUSTRIAL BRANCH	New Sums Assured	£60,335,586
	Total Sums Assured and Bonus	£532,117,789
	Premiums Received	£20,259,612
	Policyholders' Share of Profits	£3,909,734
GENERAL BRANCH	Premiums Received: Fire Insurance	£929,463
	Motor Insurance	£524,827
	Sickness & Accident, Employers' Liability, Marine, Sinking Fund and Miscellaneous	£1,667,172

PAYMENTS TO POLICYHOLDERS IN 1934 EXCEEDED **£28,500,000** | TOTAL ASSETS EXCEED **£290,000,000** | TOTAL CLAIMS PAID EXCEED **£460,000,000**

COPIES OF CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH AND DIRECTORS' REPORT SENT ON APPLICATION